



THE BANGLADESH TODAY

◆ UNITING PEOPLE EVERYDAY ◆

SATURDAY

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REGIONAL

Abe's base aims to restore past religious, patriotic values

>Page 6



ENTERTAINMENT

Shraddha Kapoor hopes successful run continues in 2015

>Page 8



SPORT

Tensions rise as players lose cool

>Page 9



ROAD TO VICTORY

Mitra Bahini lay siege to Dhaka, call for surrender of Pak forces

DHAKA : By the 13th of December, 1971 the war was coming to an end. The Soviet pacific fleet and the US seventh Fleet was facing each other in the Bay of Bengal, while the Mitra Bahini was firmly placed around Dhaka for the penultimate battle, reports BSS.

Inside the besieged city were about 30,000 Pakistani troops and 6,000 Mitra Bahini troops were outside the city. And more Mitra Bahini soldiers were on the way.

The chief of staff of the Indian army, General S H F J Manekshaw, once again appealed to the Pakistani forces to surrender, unconditionally. The message was repeatedly broadcast over All-India Radio, every hour, both in English and Urdu.

In a message to General Rao Farman Ali, civil affairs' advisor to General Niazi, the same message was conveyed.

The message was sent to Farman Ali because he was behind the UN resolution for cease-fire a few days back which was later scuttled by Pakistan's president, Yahya Khan. Meanwhile, Indian air-strikes in Dhaka were continuing.

The Pakistani leadership in occupied Dhaka was visibly upset by the misinformation fed to them by Islamabad.

General Niazi, the GOC-in-Command of East Pakistan was so shaken that he went to Governor Malek complaining about the situation.

> (Contd. on page-11)

19 Bangladeshis rescued while being trafficked to India thru' Satkhira

SATKHIRA : Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in a drive rescued 19 Bangladeshi people while they were being trafficked to India through Gazipur border here Friday morning, reports UNB.

The rescued people hail from Gazipur, Sunamganj, Mymensingh and Thakurgaon districts.

Tipped off, a BGB conducted a drive in the area and rescued them from the border in the morning, said Nayeb Subedar Haider Ali, BOP Commander of Gazipur border.

Later, they were handed over to Satkhira Sadar Police station.

A case was filed in this connection.

Oil spillage to darken future of locals

Sundarban's ecology under threat

TBT DESK

The situation of the world's largest mangrove forest 'Sundarban' is worsening three days post the oil spillage from the oil tanker Southern Star 7. Estimated 250,000 litres of oil has now spread throughout the 34,000 hectares of land, expanding from the Shela river and Passur river towards the Bay of Bengal, causing unimaginable effect not only to the biodiversity of the region, but also to the livelihood of the residents and fishermen. The leak has been denoted to be an ecological catastrophe.

Even though the sunken oil tanker has been salvaged from the river, the oil spillage hasn't been brought under control. A thick layer of oil is spreading throughout the nearby areas. The oil spill has already blackened the shoreline, threatening trees, plankton, vast population of fishes and dolphins.

As per the officials the total environmental damage cannot be accounted as yet, however the damage will be visible soon and it is predictable. The water quality of the region has already been damaged to a great extent, which will leave a disastrous result in the upcoming days.

The toxicity has spread in the air. As per the fishermen of the areas, dead fishes and crabs are seen floating on the river. Dead crabs and crocs are now visible on the shore.

The area is also known to be one of the largest sanctuaries for rare species of dolphins; however, no dolphins have been spotted in the area since the mishap. It is expected that tigers and dolphins too will be immensely affected. Crabs, which are the largest single group in the forest are facing the biggest threat.

Environment specialists included that if crabs are affected, dolphins will find it even difficult to breathe.

> (Contd. on page-11)

Truck accident in Jessore kills 3 including JUST student

JESSORE CORRESPONDENT

At least three people have been killed and 10 others including children injured when a truck hit a human hauler on Jessore-Chowgacha highway at Abdullahpur Bazar under Chowgacha upazila in Jessore.

The deceased were identified as, Abu Hamid (24), a third year student of Physical Education Department of Jessore University of Science and Technology, Khadiza Begum (50), hailing from Chaugachha and Anisur Rahman (28), from the same area.

Local witnesses informed The Bangladesh Today that a speedy truck dragged a passengers carrying 'Bhatvati' (Vehicle's local name) from the back side leaving three dead on the spot including a university student, but the truck drive had fled away sensing the mass beating.

"Jessore University of Science and Technology students blocked the Jessore-Chaugachha road to protest the death of fellow classmate. Around 12:00 pm they torched the truck set fire on road", source added.

Others injured were- Swapna (24) and her daughter Ratna (4), Khadiza Begum (35) and her daughter Bristy (8), Zahid Hasan (2), NGO activist

Yasin Ali (35), Khairul Islam (42) and Bikash Biswas (40), were admitted to Jessore Medical College Hospital.

University Vice-Chancellor Abdus Sattar confirmed the death incident of the student (Abu Hamid) to The Bangladesh Today correspondent.

Following the accident, students of JSTU rushed to the spot and set the truck on fire, which infuriated transport workers and a chase and counter chase between the students and the workers.

Electrical and Electronic Engineering student of the university, Al-Amin said, "After the accident incident, the many of JUST students came out from the university gate while the transport workers locked in a clash leaving a few students injured".

"Even they (transport workers) created obstacles while we the friends and well-wishers were trying to go to the hospital area", the student added.

Jessore kotwali police station Officer-in-Charge Anamul Hoque said: "A Jessore-bound truck knocked down the human hauler around 11am on Friday, killing three on the spot and injuring the others." "Now the situation is under control and law enforcers have been trying to arrest the truck driver soon", he added.



Oil tanker 'OT Southern Star-7' capsized on the Shala in Sundarban carrying 3 lack 57 thousand 664 liters of oil. The locals started extracting the oil from the river-water from Friday. \ Photo: Banglar Chokh

Blasts kill at least 40 in Nigerian city of Jos

Two bombs exploded near a bus station in the central Nigerian city of Jos on Thursday evening, witnesses said, the second one killing at least 40 people, reports Reuter.

Casualties from the first blast could not immediately be ascertained and Nigerian security sources could not immediately be reached for comment.

Bomb blasts that bore the hallmarks of Islamist Boko Haram militants killed 118 people in the same area of Jos in May.

"I saw a flash of light and heard a loud boom. Afterwards there was debris everywhere and mutilated bodies," witness Tanko Mohammed said of the blast in Jos's commercial Terminus district. A Reuters reporter counted 11 bodies at one bomb site and 29 at the other.

Boko Haram is a Sunni jihadist movement that has been waging a five-year insurgency to establish an Islamist state in the northeast of the country.

President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three northeastern states last year. The number of attacks has risen sharply since then, in the run-up to elections in February 2015.

The latest blasts came as both Jonathan's ruling party and the main opposition coalition agreed on candidates to contest the elections, in which security is likely to be a major campaign issue. Former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari will be challenging Jonathan at the polls for the second time.

WB expected to provide 2bn in project assistance in current FY

DHAKA : The World Bank is likely to come up with huge financing worth nearly \$ 2 billion for Bangladesh in the current fiscal year (2014-15) against some important proposed projects, including ones in education, disaster shelters, urban resilience and livelihood improvement, reports UNB.

Eight of the projects seeking the World Bank's support are Primary Education Development Programme III - AF (\$ 400mn), Income Support for the Poorest Programme (\$ 300mn), Multipurpose Disaster Shelters (\$375mn), Bangladesh Urban Resilience Project (\$165mn), NATP II (\$ 160mn), Nulton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project (\$ 200mn), Pro-Poor Slums Integration Project (\$ 80mn) and Financial Sector Support Project (\$ 300mn), according to sources at the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

An official at the ERD told UNB that the Washington-based lending agency is likely to sign three deals with the government in January, 2015 for three of the projects --

Primary Education Development Programme III, Income Support for the Poorest Programme and Multipurpose Disaster Shelters -- with a total commitment of \$1.075 billion.

ERD additional secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam told the news agency that the World Bank is likely to approve fund for the three projects at its Board meeting on December 16 next.

The senior ERD official in charge of the World Bank wing also hoped that the aid disbursement by the World Bank to Bangladesh would cross a record \$ one billion mark in fiscal 2015.

Besides, the government and the World Bank struck a deal on December 7 last under which the multilateral lender will provide \$ 60 million to modernise Bangladesh's Value Added Tax (VAT) administration and to boost tax revenue.

According to the sources, the World Bank has 31 ongoing projects amounting \$6.7 billion in Bangladesh.

> (Contd. on page-11)

Biman's domestic flights 'cannot take off next month as planned'

DHAKA : Biman Bangladesh Airlines' efforts to regain its lost domestic passenger market through resuming its local flights next month have suffered a setback as it could not yet sign the necessary deal with the Egyptian aircraft supplier company, reports UNB.

"The plan to resume Biman's domestic flights won't be possible from the next month as the agreement with Egyptian Smart Aviation for a pair of Dash 8-Q400s is yet to be signed," AM Mosaddique Ahmed, a director of Biman, now serving as acting managing director and CEO of the national flag carrier, told UNB.

He said the representatives of the Smart Aviation were scheduled to sign the deal in October last but they could not. "They'll be here to sign the deal in the middle of this month."

The aircraft are supposed to be taken on dry lease basis for five years, Mosaddique said. A dry lease is an arrangement whereby an aircraft financing entity (lessor) provides an aircraft without insurance, crew, ground staff, supporting equipment and maintenance.

"We had a plan to resume the flights early next month, but now it seems that it's not possible now, we need more time," Mosaddique said.

This was Biman's seventh attempt to collect turboprop aircraft for resuming flights on its domestic routes along with some other regional ones. Currently, it has no small aircraft to carry passengers on domestic routes.

Biman will also use the Dash 8-Q400s aircraft to operate on two regional routes -- one to Yangon and the other to Kolkata.

At present, four private local airlines -- United, Regent, Novoair and US-Bangla -- fly mainly on four domestic routes from Dhaka to Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Jessore.

The Dhaka-Chittagong route draws the highest volume of traffic followed by Dhaka-Jessore one.

Currently, around 50,000 passengers fly on the domestic routes a month where Dhaka-Chittagong route carry almost 70 percent.

> (Contd. on page-11)



Namaz Timings

Today

	Start	Jamaat
Fajr	05:14 AM	05:45 AM
Zohr	11:56 PM	01:15 PM
Asr	03:37 PM	04:15 PM
Magrib	05:17 PM	05:18 PM
Esha	06:35 PM	07:30 PM

Tahajjud After midnight

Source: Islamic Foundation

SUNSET : 05:14 PM
SUNRISE : 06:32 AM



Jessor Science & Technology University student, Abul Hanif dies including 2 others on a road accident, revenge stricken people set fire to the truck. Photo: Banglar Chokh



A rally was brought out on Friday at Dhaka university area led by DU VC Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique after the inauguration of the 6th National Undergraduate Mathematics Olympiad. Around sixty competitors are participating in the competition. Photo : TBT

10 best freelancer women to be awarded today

DHAKA : Ten successful women in freelancing career, who have done their courses under the scholarship programme of the Hi-Tech Park, will be awarded here today, reports BSS.

The award will be given at a reception programme to be held at the National Museum auditorium at 10 am.

State Minister for Information and communications technology (ICT) Zunaid Ahmed Palak will present the function as the chief guest while secretary of the ICT ministry Shyam

Sundar Sikder will be the special guest.

The women have completed freelance courses from Creative IT, one of the pioneering IT institutes of the country, under the Skill Enhancement Programme of the Hi-Tech Park of the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology.

About 2,000 youths, half of them women, have completed freelance course from Creative IT in the last one year, out of which 800 students completed their courses free of cost

under the scholarship programme on Graphics, SEO and Networking.

On the occasion, certificate will also be given to the students completed their courses, managing director of the Creative IT Monir Hosen said.

Winners of Graphics, Photography and Blogging competitions will be given award and the students of Creative IT will be introduced with two new job areas to help the freelance graduates to find their employment, he said.



Quantum foundation on Friday conferring silver and gold medals to the volunteer blood donors. The award receivers are seen with chief guest Barrister Amir-ul Islam and others distinguished guests. Photo: Banglar chokh

NDC, AFWC graduation dinner held

DHAKA : The Graduation Dinner of National Defence Course (NDC) and Armed Forces War Course (AFWC) - 14 of the National Defence College were held at Mirpur Cantonment in the city on Thursday, reports BSS.

Security Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Major General (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddiqui attended the programme as the chief guest, said a release yesterday.

Highlighting the role of NDC in building national cohesion to address development challenges in the

country, he emphasized the need for greater synergy and integrity among all national forces for attaining much coveted goal of national development and security.

He reiterated government's continuous effort in developing the country to fulfill the desire of the people and accomplish the Millennium Development Goals in future.

Commandant NDC Lieutenant General Mollah Fazle Akbar expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina for patronizing the college as the Chairperson of the Governing Body.

Among others, Chiefs of three services, members of parliament, ambassadors of different High commissioners in Dhaka, PSO of Armed Forces Division, senior secretary of the Government, vice chancellor and Professors of different universities, defence advisers of different countries in Bangladesh and high officials of Defence Forces attended the Graduation Dinner.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

S. SUHI INDUSTRIAL PARK LTD. is a 100% export oriented sweater factory under Pretty Group. Applications are invited from experienced candidates for appointment on contractual basis as **General Manager**.

Job Description:
Candidate shall be the leader of the Planning and Production team of the factory and responsible for efficient management, controlling, coordinating production planning, business development etc. with particular focus to good governance. He will ensure discipline, good organizational culture, compliance of law, supervision of all establishment matters including welfare aspects of the factory.

Professional, Academic & Experience:
Candidates must be a Graduate/Diploma in textile management/technology; have advance level academic qualification and good knowledge about IT & e-commerce. The candidate shall have at least 08 (eight) years of work experience of which 3 (three) years in similar managerial position in large apparel industry(ies).

Application Procedure:
Attractive salary and other benefits would be offered to the deserving candidate. Potential candidates are requested to send their complete resume, academic, professional and experience certificates and two copies of recent color photographs to the following address by **20th December, 2014** on e-mail to career@prettygroup@gmail.com

Corporate Office
Pretty Group
Senior General Manager
House # 08, Road # 14, Block-K, Baridhara, Dhaka
(Ref: PG/HR/Circular/14, 11/12/14/3X5)

2 'thugs' hurt in city cop firing, 7 held

DHAKA : Police arrested seven alleged extortionists from the city's Badda area on Friday evening following a firing that left two of the gangsters injured, reports UNB.

Two policemen were also injured in the incident.

Police had information that a gang of 7-8 extortionists went to a house at Road-10 of DIT Rehabilitation Project to collect toll, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station MA Jalil told UNB.

Based on the information, a police team conducted a drive at the house around 5:30pm to arrest the criminals, he said.

However, the gangsters tried to flee the scene firing on the law enforcers that prompted police to fire in self defence.

Russian delegation visits Dhaka University

Habibur Rahman Ovi
DU Correspondent:

Ural Federal University of Russia delegations paid a courtesy call on Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddique on Thursday at the latter's office of the university.

The delegation, included Dr. Anna Kurumchina and Professor Vladimir Gyzanov, visited the university area by the warmth reception of Prof. Siddique.

During the meeting they discussed about the joint collaborative academic and research programs as well as talked about signing a MoU between the University of Dhaka and Ural Federal University of Russia.

BFUJ, DUJ protest conspiracies against journalist Halim Azad

DHAKA : Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday strongly protested the conspiracies being hatched by a vested quarter of Narayanganj against Deputy Chief News Editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Poet Halim Azad, reports UNB.

In a joint statement, BFUJ President Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and DUJ President Altaf Mahmud and General Secretary Quddus Afrad said Halim Azad is not only a well-established journalist, but also a front-running Freedom Fighter of the War of Liberation.

The journalist society will give a befitting reply if the evil activities which the vested quarter launched against him (Halim Azad) for fishing in troubled waters are not stopped immediately, they said.

The BFUJ and DUJ leaders alleged that the vested quarter is out to misguide the people by disseminating false, fabricated and untrue information by quoting comments of Halim Azad that he made at a rally of "Toqi Mancha" held at No 2 Railgate in Narayanganj town on December 5.

"We strongly protest and condemn the ill efforts to attach stigma to this Freedom Fighter and journalist," they said.

Factory sealed off for producing poultry feed of tannery waste

DHAKA : A Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) mobile court sealed off a poultry feed factory at Hazaribagh Beribadh in the city on Friday on charge of producing the fodder using poisonous tannery waste, reports UNB.

Two of the factory employees were also punished in this connection.

A team of Rab-2, led by its deputy director Dr Md Didarul Alam, conducted a drive at 'Hypo Feed Factory' at 42/8/Ka Sonatagar of Hazaribagh Beribadh at about 11:30am.

During the drive, it was found that poultry feed was being produced at the factory using tannery waste which is harmful to human health.

Later, the Rab team detained two employees -- Saiful Islam, 24, and Md Jamal Miah.

During interrogation, Saiful revealed that although factory owner Khalil who is suffering from cancer instructed them not to use poisonous tannery waste for producing the fodder, they had long been using those defying his order.

WHO to implement guidelines for indoor air quality

DHAKA : World Health Organisation (WHO) yesterday targeted to implement new guidelines for indoor air quality: household fuel combustion, at a regional workshop of representatives of Member States on air quality and human health organized in New Delhi, India, reports UNB.

"We must act to protect people from air pollution ... Half the deaths due to pneumonia in children aged less than five years can be attributed to household air pollution making it a leading risk factor for childhood deaths," said WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh.

Four million deaths each year have been attributable to exposure to household air pollution and a further 3.7 million deaths per

year have been attributable to ambient (or outdoor) air pollution and approximately 40 percent of the deaths from indoor air pollution and 25 percent of those attributed to outdoor air pollution occur in the eleven countries of WHO South-East Asia Region, he said.

"The ministries of health must play a stronger role in communicating the health impacts of air pollution and advocate for policies by other sectors that offer the most health benefits," added Dr Khetrapal Singh.

Representatives from Member States, the Global Alliance for Clean Cook stoves, Clean Air Asia and US Centers for Disease Surveillance and Prevention are among the participants at the two day workshop, concluded yesterday.



Extra police protection was deployed at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque on Friday. Photo: Banglar chokh

Bangladeshi 'Moon Boat' exhibited in Paris Int'l Nautic Show

DHAKA : An authentic Moon Boat from Cox's Bazaar is on display in the International Nautic Show from December 5-14 at the exhibition center of Porte de Versailles in Paris, reports UNB.

This 28-feet long beautifully designed traditional country boat was brought to Paris from Cox's Bazaar by a French NGO named Watever, aims to raise awareness about the naval heritage of Bangladesh and the necessity to preserve it, said a press release.

Bangladesh Embassy in Paris partnered with Watever by sponsoring a reception at the inaugural gathering by which the moon boat has been presented at the Nautical Show.

The Moon Boat exhibition was inaugurated by Bangladesh Ambassador to France M Shahidul Islam.

A book entitled "Boats, a Treasure of Bangladesh" written and published in English by Yves Marre and Enayetullah Khan was also presented at the event.

The book documents the naval tradition of Bangladesh and the importance of boats to the Bangladeshi population as a means of transport and trade and a toll for adaptation to floods.

A large number of French citizens as well as members of the Bangladeshi community in France attended the inaugural ceremony of the event held on December 10.

Artist Shahabuddin Ahmed, Mime Artist Parthopratim Majumder, NBR Chairman M Ghulam Hussain, former Navy Chief Rear Admiral M A Taher (Retd), social and political personalities and embassy officials were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD
Pabna Road Circle, Pabna.
☎ 0731-66060 Fax: 0731-66060
e-mail: sepab@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No 2815 Date : 13-12-2014

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Superintending Engineer, RHD, Pabna Road Circle, Pabna for the procurement of:

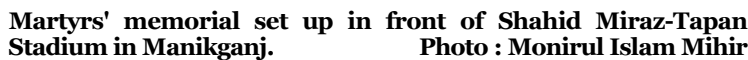
Tender Package Description: Construction of widening, strengthening and surfacing including Earth work & Protective work at Ch 0+000 to 2+000 & 9+400 to 10+030 & RCC Box culvert (1 X 6.00m X 5.00m) at 5th Km & (2 X 6.00m X 6.00m) at 7th Km of Ramchandrapur More (Rail Gate) to Bharamara via Bhagura Upazilla Head Quarter Road under pabna Road Division during the year 2014-2015 (e-Tender ID: 16112)

e-Tender details can be downloaded from 15-12-2014 to 13-1-2015 on e-GP system portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> for pursue.

e-Tenders will be accepted only upto 13-1-2015, 12:00. Accepted tenders will be opened online immediately after 13-1-2015, 12:00.

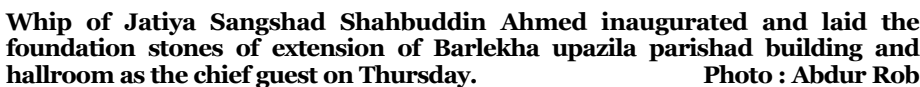
(Md. Abu Rawshan)
ID No. 005103
Superintending Engineer, RHD
Pabna Road Circle Pabna.

GD-1770/14 (6X3)



**Monirul Islam Mihir, Manikganj
Correspondent**

Seventy-eight Pak soldiers were killed in a fierce battle with freedom fighters. In the last week of November in 1971, fresh groups of freedom fighters entered different areas of Manikganj and defeated Pakistani troops in a few battles. Finally they declared the then subdivision free on December 13.



The sufferings of daily wage earners like day labourers, rickshaw pullers, traffic police and farm labourers have also been mounted during the morning and evening hours. The overall cold-wave situation deteriorated in the region with the lowering of mercury level coupled with reducing gap between minimum and maximum

HABIGANJ : Responding to the call of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, women of Habiganj also joined the Liberation War in 1971, reports BSS.

The others of the two households were kept in custody in the house of one Rashid Miah, a collaborator of the Pakistan army.

Talking to BSS, Assistant Professor Dr Belal Uddin of Pediatrics Department of Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital informed that all three Pediatrics wards of the hospital were occupied with patients attacked with cold- related diseases. Even, many patients took shelter on the floor of the wards.

In addition to the sufferings of the people, particularly the poor, cultivation especially wheat, potato, chilli and Irri-Boro and pisciculture has been affected.

They said proper management with good

The chief guest stressed effective managements in the grassroots level cooperative societies to accelerate the process of developing human resources as well as women leadership to eradicate poverty through increasing productions and creating jobs. He called for making best use of the allocations and assistance being provided by the government and non-government organisations to accelerate rural uplift and women empowerment in building the poverty-, exploitation-and hunger-free Bangladesh.

Mashrekul Alam, Joypurhat Correspondent

district, SM Solaman Ali, upazila parishad chairman Fazlur Rahman, municipal mayor Abdul Aziz Molla, upazila vice chairman Hasibul Alam Liton, etc were present at the occasion. Abdus Salam, Managing Director of Joypurhat Sugar Mills said that, as much as 6,425 tonnes of Sugar is targeted to be produced during the current season by crushing 90,000 tonnes of sugarcane. The price of sugarcane has been fixed at Taka 97.60 per mound in different purchasing centres of the mills' zone this year.

Rafiqul Islam, Gaibandha
Correspondent

The remaining members are now undercover and police members launched drives to hunt down the remaining accused.



Md Nasir Uddin, Tangail
Correspondent

On Friday evening police removed the bus from the ditch. Then the fire service members recovered the dead of Babu Miah.

Salauddin Belal, Mymensingh
Correspondent

The programs were presided by president of GKP Degree College Sirajul Islam. Among others parliament member Faqrul Imam, Salaudinn Mukti, former upazila chairman Foyzur Rahman Kabir, professor Sultana Parvin, chairman Nur Md Mir, etc also gave speeches.



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

Bangladesh Power Development Board

যাযাবরদের স্মরণে এই বছর
কলকাতা, ১৯শে মার্চ, ১৯৬৫
নিম্নলিখিত
কেন্দ্রে : ১৯৬৫/৬৬/১০

আমর না-কলকাতা/১৯৬৫/১০/১৯৬৫/১০

১৯৬৫/১০-১২-১৯৬৫/১০

খোলা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আমরা নিম্ন বর্ণিত কাজে জন্য আইন পরামর্শার্থে নিম্ন বর্ণিত শীর্ষকসমূহের দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

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২০।	২০।	২০।


 মেজর জেনারেল জাহাঙ্গীর
 চেয়ারম্যান (আইসিএল)
 কলকাতা, ১৯শে মার্চ, ১৯৬৫
 বিজ্ঞপ্তি, নিম্নলিখিত



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Saturday, December 13, 2014

Ensuring supply of safe vegetables

Winter is the best time of the year in Bangladesh for consumption of vegetables and winter time for this country has arrived. The supply of vegetables in the winter time is found to be particularly good in terms of price and variety. Health conscious people in the country are also more and more taking an interest to replace meats in their diets with vegetables.

Therefore, at a time when consumption of vegetables in the country are clearly on the rise, it indeed comes as disappointing that vegetable producers and their handlers at different levels in the distribution chain are resorting to large scale use of pesticides in the fields to preserve the vegetables and at secondary levels the handlers are using various chemicals to artificially lend colour or appearance of freshness to such vegetables.

Both the insecticides and chemicals can be highly toxic . They make the vegetables (on which these are applied) toxic. Thus, in this manner toxic substances enter the human food chain as consumption of such vegetables by humans means passage of the toxins into human bodies. Regular entry of toxins in human bodies can cause many deadly diseases including cancer and failures of vital organs like kidneys and livers.

So far, nothing has been heard that any organization is engaged in any service to persuade the farmers not to use pesticides but to go for natural ways of pest control. Nobody has warned or taken actions against vegetable sellers not to spray chemicals on them considering the health hazardous aspects of such practice.

Thus, it is high time for the relevant ministry to do something immediately to safeguard public health from the serious threat posed by poisoned vegetables. Recently, we noted some activism against the use of formalin in kitchen markets specially against formalin sprayed on fishes and fruits. But this kind of activism is found missing in relation to vegetables. But considering that vegetables are consumed a great deal at this time of the year and considering the grave health risks associated to consumption of vegetables laced with pesticides and insecticides, it is only proper for all concerned to swing into action to demand the purity of the vegetables.

Researchers at the Institute of Development Policy Analysis in Bangladesh found banned and suspect pesticides among the 12,000 tonnes imported into the country last year -- a three-fold increase over the last decade . Suppliers continue to sell many chemical and also 12 particularly controversial pesticides dubbed the "dirty dozen" by activists campaigning worldwide to stop their manufacture. But gullible and illiterate farmers are persuaded by glib sales talk at promotional camps, and through incentive schemes, to buy new unregistered formulations that promise to protect crops against pest attacks and disease

In a recent survey of 820 boro (winter rice), potato, bean, eggplant, cabbage, sugarcane and mango farmers in Bangladesh, more than 47 percent of farmers were found to use more pesticides than needed to protect their crops.

With only four percent of our farmers formally trained in pesticide use or handling, and over 87 percent freely admitting that they used little or no protective measures while applying pesticides, overuse is potentially a very threatening problem to farmers' health as well as the environment in this country. Thus, in Bangladesh there is an urgent need to actively promote safer pesticide use and hygienic practices among people who handle these substances.

Research findings also highlight the need for policymakers to design effective, targeted outreach programs that address pesticide risk, safe handling, and protection. The approach should ideally be participatory, with a view to addressing the most dangerous information gaps. Another important finding from Bangladesh is that specific crops and geographic locations experience more overuse than others. For the most measurable results, interventions should focus on these crops and regions.

Information on how pesticides affect health is quite limited in Bangladesh. Farmers in Bangladesh are often unable to distinguish the symptoms of pesticide poisoning from other health problems which suggests that regular medical checkups and blood tests should be conducted for those who handle highly or moderately toxic pesticides. Also, farmers should be encouraged to switch to lower-hazard pesticides and use protective gear to reduce individual health risks.

Even when individual farmers are careful, pervasive contamination from others' pesticide use and persistent pesticide residues in local water, air and soil may pose significant health risks. Collective measures, therefore, can be an important complement to individual actions.

Chemically polluted runoff from fields has contaminated surface and ground water, damaged fisheries, and destroyed freshwater ecosystems in Bangladesh. A significant part of such contamination is the result of unregulated pesticide use.

But a great deal of positive changes can occur with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and conventional techniques. IPM comprises a range of approaches, from carefully targeted use of chemical pesticides to biological techniques that use natural parasites and predators to control pests. Results from Bangladesh suggest that the productivity of IPM based farming is not significantly different from the productivity of conventional farming. Since IPM reduces pesticide costs with no accompanying loss in production, it seems to be more profitable than conventional farming.

Interview results also suggest substantial health and ecological benefits. However, collective adoption of these methods is a must. Neighbours' continued reliance on chemicals to kill pests will also kill helpful parasites and predators, as well as exposing IPM farmers and local ecosystems to chemical spillovers from adjoining fields.

Report illustrates CIA's legacy of mistrust

Con Coughlin

The revelations of the agency's systematic torture of terror suspects have stripped it of its integrity.

Fifty-five years ago, when work began on the CIA's new headquarters at Langley, Virginia, Allen W. Dulles, the spy agency's first civilian director, stipulated that its motto, taken from St John's Gospel, should be inscribed at the building's entrance. To this day, anyone who enters the vast complex is confronted by the engraving: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

It is unlikely that the thousands of employees who work there are feeling particularly liberated in the wake of the US Senate Intelligence Committee's damning report into the agency's controversial programme to detain and interrogate terrorism suspects after the September 11 attacks.

President Barack Obama insists that Americans should continue to consider CIA officers as "patriots" to whom the country owes "a profound debt of gratitude". But there will be many at Langley who feel a deep sense of betrayal that, yet again, the agency has found itself caught in the crosshairs of a bitter political battle between Republicans and Democrats over how best to confront the threat posed by Islamist terrorists. Indeed, there are many current and former CIA officials who are already questioning the veracity of the committee's account.

- The Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2014

Big Ideas in Social Change, 2014

TINA ROSENBERG

This year, people in Charleston, S.C., taught young children to read. In Las Cruces, N.M., others cured hepatitis C. And still others treated depression in the slums of Kampala, Uganda.

On the surface, these people have nothing in common - except for being featured in Fixes columns this year. But they are all cousins, in a sense. They all owe their success to one particular strategy.

This year in the Fixes column, we've looked at 60 or so ways that people are trying to change the world. Some of these projects are successful, some partially successful, some are failing in ways we can learn from, and some are intriguing ideas that have yet to compile a track record.

The initiatives we've covered are - quite literally - all over the map. But there are ideas that unite them, a few strategies that show up over and over again. By connecting the dots we can get a sense of what can work in various contexts to solve many different types of problems. These, then, are Fixes' nominations for the big ideas in social change of 2014.

Reading Partners in Charleston, Project ECHO in New Mexico, and Strong Minds in Kampala all rely on task shifting: taking jobs normally restricted to specialized professionals and turning them over to people with far less training in order to reach underserved groups.

At face value, task shifting sounds dangerous. After all, we have professional qualifications for a reason. It takes training and experience to be a good teacher, hepatologist or psychologist. People in those professions have learned things they need to know.

What's next, having amateurs take over the operating room? It's already happening. Zambia, a country the size of Texas, has only six surgeons in its rural areas. So it offers clinical officers a three-year surgery course, during which they learn to do the most commonly needed operations, such as C-sections, hysterectomies, appendectomies and bowel obstruction surgery.

Personally, I'd prefer a surgeon. But in rural Zambia, a surgeon isn't the alternative. Death is. Task shifting matters because it brings good things like health care and education to people who otherwise wouldn't get them at all.

And not just in Africa. Project ECHO began training rural doctors by video because when it started, in 2003, only 5 percent of New Mexico's 34,000 chronic hepatitis C patients were getting treatment. It uses regular case-based training, and specialists work remotely with the front-line doctors and nurses.

Another example is dental therapists, who have two or four years of graduate training. They are treating patients in Alaska and Minnesota (and soon, Maine) who live in areas with limited access to dental services.

Task-shifting doesn't necessarily mean second-class care, and sometimes it produces better results than the specialists do. The patients with hepatitis C in rural New Mexico seen by local non-specialists do better than those seen at the specialist clinic in Albuquerque, possibly because health workers from the same community do better at getting patients to stick to their care plans, and can interact regularly and catch

problems early.

In India, the nongovernmental group Pratham devised one-page tests for basic reading and math. Volunteers with very little training go door-to-door to test children. Because of their simplicity and portability, these tests have allowed Indian parents for the first time to grasp the true failure of the country's educational system - and mobilize to do something about it.

Especially when care involves behavioral change, less training can be an asset, not a liability. Who's better at getting people to improve their eating and exercise habits? A doctor - an authority figure who can spend only 15 minutes and generally learns little about a patient's life - or a health worker from the patient's own community, with the same problems, who can visit the patient at home and has the luxury of spending time? Experience indicates it's the latter.

Task-shifting can be an alternative any time resources are short and people can learn to do a specific activity without the full training specialists receive. Reading Partners succeeds, for example, because it isolated the key components of helping children learn to read, and found a way to teach them clearly and quickly to community volunteers.

Like other forms of task-shifting, this is a money-saver, as volunteers or low-paid workers are stretching the efforts of higher-paid professionals. Such programs also allow people to get access to preventive services, which almost always result in huge savings later. The advantages of task shifting can be summed up in the aphorism: "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

This idea is related to task-shifting - in fact, it's the main reason task-shifting is effective: we often underestimate what ordinary people can accomplish and succumb to stereotypes about low-income people or minorities. Look at the Springboard Collaborative, a summer reading program in Philadelphia, for example. Springboard uses the public school system's most underemployed resource: low income, predominately African-American or Latino parents, a group usually falsely written off as unable or unwilling to help their children.

Alejandro Gac-Artigas, Springboard's founder, wondered whether low-income parents didn't get as involved with their children's education as more affluent parents because they didn't believe they had much to offer. So Springboard's system gives parents an easy-to-use curriculum that mainly involves asking questions of the child before, during and after reading - even parents who can't read can use it. Parents average over 90 percent attendance at the weekly training sessions - and instead of falling back several months over the summer, which is standard for low-income kids, their children gain more than three months in reading. "In our experience, people want to do things they're good at and avoid things they're bad at," said Gac-Artigas.

A world away, nine million women in villages in Mali and some 40 other African countries are living better by using savings groups. Women make small deposits at each meeting, and members can borrow from the pool of funds.

It's sort of like microcredit - except there's no money from outside and no

bank, just a locked box. No outsiders at all, in fact, except to facilitate spreading the word and getting things started, and not always then. These groups go on for years and years with no intervention.

The advantages are obvious: women who live too far away from anything to be served by a bank or traditional microcredit can benefit, which means they are less likely to experience food shortages during the year. After the initial training, these groups cost nothing to run. And they last. Projects NGOs bring in from outside often fall apart when the NGO pulls out. Not savings groups, because they truly belong to the women themselves. (The Family Independence Institute in the United States uses a similar model of self-organized problem-solving led by families, and has also produced surprising results.)

We usually define "helping people" as doing things for them. But often, it should mean asking them to do things for others. People like to feel competent, useful, needed - they benefit greatly from that feeling. That's the insight behind the work of The Mission Continues, which asks veterans - a highly service-oriented group - to continue serving at home, working with chronically homeless veterans, building playgrounds or mentoring young people.

Another example is the Homeless World Cup, a series of local, national and international soccer leagues for homeless people. If you listed what homeless people need, a soccer league probably wouldn't figure high on that list. And yet it can be a catalyst, a painless way to for a homeless person to build the confidence, trust and relational skills to be able to go after all the other things they need.

It can also work for depression, the world's second most burdensome disease - for women, it's first. In Kampala, Strong Minds is testing cost-effective ways to treat depression, with the goal of eventually getting to self-sustaining peer groups. Peer support groups do successfully treat depression. They can be doubly effective, in fact, because people get more out of helping others than being helped. Helping others reinforces their own behaviors, and being useful is in itself a depression-fighter. In Alcoholics Anonymous, the very model of a self-sustaining peer group, research shows that sponsors benefit more than the people they sponsor. But it's best to do both - and in peer support groups, people do.

A medical mystery: A child lands in the hospital with asthma. The doctor prescribes medicines. The child uses them - properly. Yet two months later, she is back in the hospital.

Maybe the problem is that the child lives alongside mold, insects and rats. That child doesn't need a doctor - she needs a lawyer, who can persuade, or threaten, the landlord to clean it up. And at more than 230 medical clinics around the country, lawyers are on hand to help.

Health isn't just a medical problem. Health is undercut by substandard housing, air pollution, food deserts, dangerous streets, trauma and toxic stress - the social determinants of health. Being poor can make you sick, and doctors can't always help.

Education, too, has social determinants. "Zero tolerance" has become the fashion in American schools - kids who act up are

suspended and then expelled, even in preschool, and sometimes arrested.

This policy succeeds only in sabotaging the education of the children who need it most - mostly low-income African-American or Hispanic boys, many of whom have already faced daunting, often overwhelming, problems. When a 6-year old is aggressive, uncontrollable or violent in class, the question shouldn't be "What's wrong with him?" but "What happened to him?" The answer, too often, is that he experienced homelessness, divorce, family violence, incarceration, drug use, neighborhood violence, sudden separation or loss - or typically a combination of the above. Researchers now call these things ACEs or "adverse childhood experiences." Increasingly, they are measuring them and discovering how drastically they can decrease the chances of a successful life if parents, educators or doctors fail to recognize them and respond. But parents and teachers can learn new, and better ways of helping these children - far more effective than reflexive punishment - and the kids themselves can learn ways to calm themselves and manage their strong emotions.

Social determinants follow students all the way through their educations. Community colleges have become the colleges of the poor in this country. And six years after enrolling, only one-third have completed a degree or transferred to a four-year college.

Why do students drop out? Overwhelmingly, it's that they can't afford school, and can't afford to take time off from work to study.

One response is Single Stop, which has offices now spreading through community colleges that help people find out if they qualify for benefits such as food stamps, child care subsidies, federal financial aid or the earned-income tax credit - and if so, Single Stop helps clients to get them.

Looking for the social determinants is not the same as looking for root causes, which can sometimes become an excuse for inaction - the idea that you have to solve everything before you can solve anything. Both concepts recognize that poverty causes interlocking problems. But targeting social determinants is specific and practical. A medical clinic doesn't have to lift a child out of poverty to treat her asthma. But it must get the landlord to do mold abatement. Schools can't reduce adverse childhood experiences. But they can manage their impact.

You don't have to solve everything to make progress on social problems. But what needs to be solved may be hidden from view. Finding it, attacking it and measuring the results - that's a big idea in social change, this year and every year.

- The New York Times

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The EU is heading for disaster

PETER OBORNE

The single currency's final unwinding may well give Britain everything it wants from Europe and may help realise Thatcher's eternal vision of a Europe of nations

As Karl Marx was one of the earliest to point out, economics (though so much less interesting) is far more important than politics. Marx considered all political events as epiphenomena. He viewed great men as blind instruments of irresistible forces, which they themselves could hardly comprehend. The Marxist vision of society has been disproved many times, always at epic human cost.

However, his doctrine that productive forces propel history has stood the test of time - and is invaluable for an understanding of the current predicament of the European Union. It elegantly explains why European Monetary Union was destined to fail. The state socialists and former communists who invented the euro never got to grips with this aspect of Marxist thought. Only Conservatives with an intelligent appreciation of economics and history - an enlightened congregation that included Margaret Thatcher, Oliver Letwin, Peter Lilley, Tim Congdon, John Redwood, Nicholas Ridley and Alan Walters - grasped that the EMU would collapse under the weight of its own contradictions, and that it was folly to construct a single currency before the political conditions were in place.

Meanwhile, the European elite, who advocated the euro (British

representatives included Michael Heseltine, Peter Mandelson, Tony Blair, Ken Clarke, Nick Clegg and Danny Alexander, at the time only a cadet member of the European political class, so perhaps the chief secretary can be forgiven) ignored all warnings. Indeed, Lord Mandelson is still advocating British membership! It is impossible to exaggerate the arrogance, the bone-headed stupidity and above all the brutality and callousness of these Europhiles. Their demented attempt to impose a new economic model on an unworkable political structure has already caused untold suffering. At the heart of their project is an audacious attempt to prove the primacy of politics over economics. Bear in mind that it is an experiment for which the European elite personally do not have to pay a price. Their experiment has caused depression (not recession as inaccurately reported by pro-European journalists at the BBC and elsewhere) across much of Europe. This is getting worse. The Italian economy is moribund, social cohesion has vanished and Italians are starting to turn venomously on immigrants. The Greek economy has shrunk by 30 per cent, and one quarter of the population is out of work. Youth unemployment in Spain stands at an unspeakable 50 per cent.

We are talking about tens of millions of ruined lives and busted dreams. This reality has already brought about a convulsion in Europe. Entirely new

political parties have emerged, from the far-Left and far-Right, brought into existence by a common scream of despair against a broken system. For the time being, the former political class remains in charge. It has as much legitimacy as the ancient regime in pre-revolutionary France, with the same moral bankruptcy, calculating venality and profound sense of entitlement.

This elite has the same distaste for democracy as 18th-century lords and over the long term, the same chances of survival. In its dying convulsions, Jean-Claude Juncker's political class has abolished democracy. Italy has had three consecutive unelected prime ministers since Silvio Berlusconi's scepticism about the euro caused the European Union (EU) elite to recruit an unscrupulous cabal of bankers to remove him (former US treasury secretary Timothy Geithner gives a gripping account of this unwholesome manoeuvre in his recent memoir).

That it has survived so far is thanks to a series of financial confidence tricks, of which the latest example is Juncker's implausible scheme to convert 21 billion euros (Dh95.5 billion) of equity into a 315 billion euros slush fund to relaunch the European economy. This amounts to no more than wishful ravings, though it would be financially disastrous if by some malign chance it were put into effect. Things cannot go on like this and this month, we have witnessed a series of telling signs that the Eurozone has turned

back into a danger zone.

Last Monday, it was learnt that France and Italy would soon breach their fiscal limits. There are signs of disharmony at the European Central Bank (ECB). Yet more proof that no central bank can exert real authority without a state behind it. The ECB is racking up worthless sovereign debt and bank loans in its doomed battle to save the Eurozone: In due course, there will be an almighty row about who will pay up for the black hole. Hopes that economic growth will float the Eurozone off the rocks have been extinguished by forecasts of stagnation from the cruelly realistic ECB. Meanwhile, the Eurozone has been plunged into deflation, meaning that in real terms the value of debt will rise, a chilling repeat of the European experience of the 1930s. Most deadly of all is the resurrection of the Greek debt horror. The country is ungovernable and last Tuesday, the president was (quite rightly) sacked, opening up the possibility of a spring general election and thus causing the biggest collapse on the Athens stock market in 27 years. We are very close now to Marx's moment of alignment. The political structure must be made to fit the economic reality, or vice versa. Bear in mind that the single currency will only work with a single economic policy, a single treasury, a single system of taxation and spending, a single national parliament and single political identity.

- The Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2014

Northeast India needs a Yoda

For the northeast of India to prosper and finally make it home to economic fame and social stability, we perhaps need a Yoda of Star Wars fame. Someone who can predict the future; offer insights on what needs to be done, and the time plots of when and how to get there.

I say this with some measure of seriousness (as someone with roots in the region) as the negatives that afflict the region are far too many: armed conflicts, intra-ethnic violence, secessionist movements, unemployment, demands for secession, lack of infrastructure, cultural estrangement, political indifference, ethnic hatred, and limited tolerance for ethnic "others". We therefore have to aspire, like in the world of space, to something higher than ourselves, to that infinite cosmic unity that makes the impossible seem real. We will come to this aspect later in the article.

On the morning of November 29, the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi began a tour of the northeastern region of India, he tweeted of how he was eagerly looking forward to attending a wide variety of programs and connecting with the people. Invoking Vaastushastra (the Indian traditional system of harmonizing energies for architecture) to highlight the

importance of the northeast wing of a house for the prosperity of its occupants, Modi dreamt big for the region as India's gateway to Asia in the 21st 'Asian Century'.

In a whirlwind tour covering Assam, Nagaland,

to Southeast Asia. Modi announced a slew of much needed projects including scholarships for students, a national sports university, agricultural colleges, upgraded power and digital connectivity and new railway lines.

inaugurated a power plant in Tripura. With a nearly US\$10 billion budgetary allocation for the northeastern region, Modi's focus is on infrastructure, both inside India and on projects linking the northeast regionally such as the road from Imphal to

to both. The heart of the issue being the Naga peace talks which have been running around in circles for 17 long years, with no resolution in sight. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is a widely criticized issue in Manipur's civil society.

separate Naga inhabited administrative unit. On the other hand Nagaland's chief minister T R Zeliang pressed upon Modi to finalize the Naga peace process.

Modi did throw a poser to the Nagas during his speech at the Hornbill Festival to "take pause to look back at the past fifty years and take stock". And while Modi has instructed his official interlocutor to bring speedy closure to the Naga issue within 18 months, the prime minister kept his cards close to his chest.

Modi did reveal his intentions of following up on the land swap agreement with Bangladesh to demarcate the border comprehensively. In Assam, the prime minister pushed for this solution in tandem with cracking down on existing illegal immigrants as the most effective measures, although the proposal will seem like a loss in the short term. Modi's announcements were not well received in Assam, which along with West Bengal, Meghalaya and Tripura stands to lose about 40 square kilometers of land to Bangladesh.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar demanded that Modi take up transportation access through Bangladesh with that country. In his outreach to Bangladesh Modi offered to sell surplus power

and thanked Bangladesh for allowing transshipment of heavy machinery to the 726-MW gas-based power plant at Palatana, 60 kilometers south of Agartala, the capital of Tripura.

The genesis of the majority of these issues and the theme of Modi's visit lie in the economic deprivation of the northeastern region since independence. Modi did well to kick off massive economic packages to alleviate the anxieties of people of the northeastern states. With enhanced infrastructure in place, Modi is betting big on boosting economic development with tourism, organic agriculture, textiles, IT-enabled services and traditional industries. His long-term goal is for the region to act as the economic bridgehead for India into Southeast Asian markets.

While Modi's visit was an internal one to the northeast, it does underscore the importance the region plays in the new foreign policy outreach of India to Southeast Asia. Towards this end, the resolution of all internal issues has become prime imperative to prepare the region for its role as India's "Gateway to Asia in the 21st Asian Century". So Modi certainly has his plate full to achieving internal stability and international connectivity in a region that has been a complete administrative

disaster and suffered governance since independence.

The immediate challenge is to provide a personal leadership to resolving the festering thorny issues that have long plagued the region. What needs to be done now is follow through with final binding political and administrative decisions to secure the region and ensure harmony amongst its multitude of ethnic groups and communities to truly get the 'being India's gateway' share of prosperity in this "Asian Century".

his would require a different conceptualization than just state-driven approaches based on a "synthetic" sense of unity. Rather, it will require the meeting of cultures, of peoples, of hearts, of feeling that being part of the 'Indian dream' is truly emancipating for individuals and for ethnic communities. It will require a sense of organic natural unity in diversity, not something forced down from Delhi, but something spontaneous, lively, and inspiring.

That is why we need a Yoda, an old Jedi force who is powerful, wise, and has a strong vision for the future. Hopefully, northeast India will finally get it act together for itself. But then again, hope cannot be a policy. Steps have to be tangible and realistic, plotted on a time-scale with achievable goals.

CIA torture: the future starts here

I have now read most of the 499-page summary of the Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA torture. Having spent years investigating the abuses detailed by the committee, I did not think it was possible to still be shocked by the CIA - but it is.

The report repeats many facts already reported about the CIA torture program, including the use of brutal stress positions, extended sleep deprivation with bright light and loud noise, waterboarding, and shutting detainees inside coffins.

It also contains new details showing that CIA torture was even more egregious than previously thought: painful restraints, use of punitive "anal feeding" or "anal rehydration," and forcing detainees with broken leg bones to stand shackled against a wall. The number of detainees was also bit higher than we thought: at least 119, not 90 to 100. Many were released - some are now free, but it will be hard to track them down. One in five didn't meet the CIA's own definition of who should be detained.

The interrogations clearly took a heavy toll, especially because the abusive methods were used in combination and over the long-term. They built upon a base of sleep deprivation and denial of human contact. Many detainees were severely affected, both physically and mentally - one is described as "clearly a broken man", another "on the verge of a complete breakdown." One passage, describing the interrogation of the CIA's first detainee, Abu Zubaydah, notes that he "frequently 'cried,' 'begged,' 'pleaded,' and 'whimpered,' but continued to deny that he had any additional information on current threats to, or operatives in, the United States."

The report contains

extensive reporting on how much of the intelligence gathered was not useful - either the CIA already had it, or could have been obtained more easily. A clear narrative emerges that the torture of Abu Zubaydah and Khaled Sheikh Mohamed appears to have been counter-productive - the CIA got some intelligence eventually but it seems they were doing quite well with both men before they started using the most brutal techniques.

The report makes it seem the CIA had very little capacity to determine when detainees they were torturing were actually giving them true information - the report cites a few examples where the CIA thought a detainee was lying when in fact he was being truthful, and vice versa. There is also a pitiful footnote (number 442) that describes the ridiculous interrogation of Abu Bakr al-Filistini, also known as Samr al-Barq, who under torture stated and recanted his statements so many times it raised the question of why he was even being questioned.

CIA interrogators profiled in the report are revealed as far less professional and trained than the CIA and White House had previously argued. Overall the impression is of CIA personnel and officials who didn't really know what they were doing, but were pretending otherwise.

The report summary is a very disturbing read. Will the full 6,000-page committee report be declassified? Will it push the Obama administration to prosecute those responsible for torture as international law requires? Unless criminal acts carry criminal penalties, there is little to prevent a future president from using torture again.

Xi and the end of Zhou Yongkang

BEIJING - With the expulsion from the Communist Party last week of Zhou Yongkang, the former security czar and member of the Standing Committee (China's supreme political body), paramount leader Xi Jinping has officially brought an end to an era. Zhou's removal, meaning he will soon be openly tried in court, in fact has only one precedent: the capture of the notorious Gang of Four in 1976 and their trial in 1980.

The Communist Party has three governing bodies, from bottom to top: the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Standing Committee.

Since then, top victims of inner-party struggle - starting with Zhao Ziyang, the former general secretary and Standing Committee member who lost his job for supporting the student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in 1989 - have been demoted and censored, but never publicly tried. In the mid-1990s, the Beijing party chief, Chen Xitong, a Politburo member, was sentenced by a court, but his higher-ranking ally in the Standing Committee was not even named. About a decade later, his Shanghai colleague Chen Liangyu, also Politburo member, followed the same course, but his mentor Huang Ju, in the Standing Committee, was spared the public ignominy of a trial and left to die of cancer.

For a while, it seemed that the same pattern would be followed with Bo Xilai, the former Chongqing party chief and Politburo member. He was publicly displayed in court last year, but the fate of Zhou, his key mentor and again a Standing Committee member, still hung in the balance. Initially, it looked as if Xi would be content with just spreading the news of Zhou's misfortune and the disgrace heaped on his allies in the military: former PLA (People's Liberation Army) Commission vice chairmen Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong.

Now, for the first time, the news of Zhou's expulsion brings us back to the end of the Cultural Revolution. It is the end of an era, Xi is clearly stating, but there is an important difference between that end and the present. Then, the notorious four (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen, either Standing Committee or Politburo members) were all arrested at once, by surprise, within a few minutes of one another in a

famous coup de main organized and carried out by Mao's former head of security, Wang Dongxing.

This time the arrests have been carried out in slow motion, in a prolonged campaign over months and years that is continuing. This indicates that in 1976 the power of the Gang of Four was still very strong. An open confrontation with them in the party was deemed difficult, with uncertain results, and to get rid of them, Wang Dongxing's allies thought it necessary to strike fast. The same people eventually ended up bringing Deng Xiaoping back to power.

Xi, however, didn't control security (which was in the hands of Zhou) or the PLA (in the hands of Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong), so he had to proceed differently. He moved through the party machinery, which was in his hands, and advanced in a slow, systematic way, eliminating not a few heads but all people who didn't comply with the new course, thousands and thousands of people, as we have seen in the past couple of years.

The present law-and-order battle seems to be both the reason for and the result of this power struggle. It is the reason because without gearing up a complex theoretical and ideological set-up, the party (which like the Roman Catholic Church is moved by deep "theological"/idealistic goals) would not find enough reasons to get rid of these very powerful figures.

It is the result because a new method is being set up now, a system of rule of law (in Chinese yi fa zhi guo, to mark it is really the concept of "rule of law," as is also stressed by its English translation, and not the "rule by law," which the old ambiguous fa zhi might have entailed) in which even the mightiest party honchos are subject to the law.

This process - only the process, not much else - is similar to what Mao Zedong applied in 1942 in Yan'an, at the conference on ideology and literature. Mao then had to get rid of the overbearing power of Moscow - which sent money that was vital for the sheer survival of the beleaguered party - and the 28 Moscow-trained Chinese "Bolsheviks" to take full control of the party. Mao wanted to keep the money, get rid of the 28 Bolsheviks, take over the party, and open up to Chinese liberal intellectuals, who were growing hesitant in their support for the

more and more conservative Nationalists (KMT).

Last but not least, Mao wanted to keep his options open with the United States, which was growing disaffected with the ever more corrupt KMT. To achieve his multi-pronged objectives, Mao had to establish a "cultural hegemony" (the term comes from Italian Communist Party chief Gramsci, who had independently developed the theory in the 1930s) over the party and the country. He then did that by affirming the principle of "Chinese characteristics" (zhongguo tese).

The idea, in very simplified terms, was that practical conditions in China could

state institutions to fit their desires.

This was objectively driving China into the Soviet trap of the Brezhnev era, in the 1970s, when powerful industries (in the case of China, the State-Owned Enterprises, or SOEs) were carving up the state, corrupting it, and making the country a hollow shell moved by the interests of a few oligarchs. Private enterprises, the dynamos of growth since the late 1970s, were being pushed aside by all-encompassing SOEs, keen on devouring all competition - at the cost of making the overall economy less efficient and slowing down China's development.

The idea of rule of law has

show the people inside China - and also outside, since the country is growing in stature in the world - the new system and to firmly cement the principle that will rule China in the future.

In fact, it will take years and a great amount of dexterity and wisdom to fully apply the principle of the rule of law in a country accustomed for decades to the naked exercise of power. The same was true with Mao's pragmatic "Chinese characteristics". They had to cut through decades of very ideological divisions and a dogmatic nationalism that had become grafted into a defense of the imperial system, all of which defended the status quo and old vested interests against

Yet, once standards are set, they live their own lives independent of the people who shaped them in the first place. The need to face practical results and realities came back to bite Mao in the case of the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s. Mao's friends and supporters went to him saying that his wonderful idea of fast development through people's mobilization was not working; it was making people starve to death, not wealthier.

Mao's first response to these criticisms could not be to deny the theory of checking the reality on the ground (the ideological backbone of his power) but had to be to deny the truthfulness of the messengers in order to deny



override ideological concerns. Therefore, a concrete accurate reading of reality on the ground - rural China, which Mao understood better than his urban-educated comrades - was to be the standard by which to gauge results and policies. Almost by definition, the 28 Moscow-trained comrades, fully acquainted with the USSR but out of touch with rustic China, were out of the game.

This time Xi is using different standards: not Chinese characteristics but the rule of law (yi fa zhi guo). He had plenty of reasons to relentlessly campaign for a new rule of law in a situation in which party officials and their clients pulled strings right and left, pushing laws and regulations aside at their convenience and shaping

brought back the standard of efficiency and development - and it has placed in a new light even the concept of Chinese characteristics, something that was invoked right and left to justify particular behaviors, which in fact were not-so-special corrupt practices.

The consequences of the new rule of law are multifold. Now, it is almost like a magic wand in Xi's hands, but it has compulsory consequences. If the rule of law is to be applied, then the people who brought the country to the brink of collapse - and are incidentally enemies to Xi - have to be eliminated, in accordance to the new laws of the country.

Zhou and his cohorts are to be publicly tried; not to be made into examples, but to

the need for deep and dramatic modifications.

The rebuilding and reshaping of the party in the early and mid-1940s, the victory in the civil war in the late 1940s, and then the early years of communist power in the 1950s saw a massive effort to root out (sometimes dramatically) old habits and vested interests.

The next years might witness a similar push, although this time the effort could be limited to within the party and not extended to the whole society. In fact, this time Chinese society and Chinese private enterprises have mostly enthusiastically embraced change and reforms that although launched and guided by the party, were also opposed by some sectors of the party.

the message. When the message became totally undeniable, he had to relinquish power in the early 1960s.

He did so grudgingly, suspecting dishonesty and disloyalty and thus unleashing the Cultural Revolution on his former friends in the mid-1960s. The movement denied any practicality of the Chinese characteristics and moved China into a new theoretical realm, with little or no touch with reality. Mao then did establish a new cultural hegemony, but this time it was based only on his crude use of power and cruel abuse of human emotions and not on actual needs and necessities - and therefore, it failed miserably after a short spell.



Abe's base aims to restore past religious, patriotic values. Japan Today

Abe’s base aims to restore past religious, patriotic values

TOKYO : As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promises voters a bright future for Japan's economy, key parts of his conservative base want him to steer the nation back toward a traditional ethos mixing Shinto myth, patriotism and pride in an ancient imperial line.

Proponents say such changes are needed to revive important aspects of Japanese culture eradicated by the U.S. Occupation after World War Two and to counter modern materialism, reports Japan Today.

Critics say they mirror the Shinto ideology which mobilised the masses to fight the war in the name of a divine emperor. The legacy of that war still haunts ties with China and South Korea nearly 70 years after its end.

A predicted landslide win by Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in a general election on Sunday, called as a referendum on his economic growth policies, and prospects Abe may become a rare long-term Japanese leader have given his ardent supporters their best chance in decades of achieving their goals. "We really have trust in

him," said Yutaka Yuzawa, director of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (SAS), the political arm of the Association of Shinto Shrines. The group, which counts Abe as a member, is one of a network of overlapping organisations sharing a similar agenda.

"The prime minister's views are extremely close to our way of thinking," Yuzawa told Reuters in an interview.

Among the key elements of the SAS agenda are calls to rewrite Japan's U.S.-drafted, post-war constitution, not only to alter its pacifist Article 9 but to blur the separation of religion and state. Education reform to better nurture "love of country" among youth is another top priority.

"After the war, there was an atmosphere that considered all aspects of the pre-war era bad," Yuzawa said. "Policies were adopted weakening the relationship between the imperial household and the people ... and the most fundamental elements of Japanese history were not taught in the schools."

Similar concerns drive other organizations such as Nippon Kaigi (Japan

Conference), a broader lobby group for which Abe serves as a "supreme adviser".

Experts see parallels between these groups and the U.S. Tea Party movement, with its calls to restore lost American values.

"Nippon Kaigi and the Shinto Association basically believe the Occupation period brought about ... the forced removal of Shinto traditions from public space and public institutions," said University of Auckland professor Mark Mullins. "For them, this was authentic Japanese identity ... and to be an independent and authentic Japan again those things need to be restored."

Abe has long been close to such groups but they have increased their reach since his first 2006-2007 term as leader.

Membership data show 301 members of parliament, mostly from the LDP, are affiliated with the SAS, including 222 in the 480-seat lower house before the election. A Nippon Kaigi caucus had 295 members, including some opposition MPs.

Pakistan Taliban slam Malala over Nobel prize

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Taliban hit out at teenage education activist Malala Yousafzai over her Nobel peace prize on Friday, slamming her as a "soldier against Islamic society", reports UNB.

Malala became a global icon after she was shot and nearly killed by the Taliban in October 2012 for insisting that girls had a right to an education.

The 17-year-old vowed to continue her struggle for every child's right to go to school when she collected her Nobel at a ceremony in Oslo on Wednesday.

She is the youngest ever Nobel peace laureate, and the first Pakistani to claim the prize, but some in her home country condemn her as a Western agent-including the militants who shot her.

Muhammad Umar Khorasani, spokesman for the main faction of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) headed by Mullah Fazlullah, told AFP that Malala had won the Nobel prize for "promoting Western culture, not education". Pakistan's patriarchal society often relegates women



The Pakistani Taliban hit out at teenage education activist Malala Yousafzai over her Nobel peace prize on Friday. PTI

to subservient domestic roles, but Malala has praised her father Ziauddin, a school teacher, for encouraging her to pursue her dreams.

The militant spokesman singled him out for criticism.

"Malala's father Ziauddin has made an agreement with

the Western powers to destroy Pashtun culture and Pakistan," Khorasani said, referring to the dominate ethnic group in the country's northwest, where Malala is from.

"Her father is using Malala as a soldier against Islamic society and teachings of

Islam."

After she was shoot in the head at point blank range, Malala was taken to Britain for treatment. Her family moved to join her and she now goes to school there, unable to return to Pakistan because of Taliban death threats.

Historical Day

Atiur Rahman's Birth Day

Atiur Rahman, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of the country was born on this day in 1953 in Jamalpur . As a development economist of Bangladesh, he is noted for writing on popular economic issues, and has written a number of books both in Bengali and English. On 29 April 2009, he was appointed as the governor of Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of the country, for a tenure of four years. Atiur Rahman has distinguished himself as an expert on poverty alleviation. It is his pet area and he has been engaged in first hand research to find the causes of poverty and means of remedy. One of the most important researches is his work on char (shoal) dwellers and poverty alleviation. Atiur Rahman is a popular newspaper columnist who often writes on poverty, public expenditure, economic development, public welfare and such other socio-economic issues. He has published 45 titles as of 2009, of which 16 are in English and 29 in Bengali some of them are Agami Diner Bangladesh: Ekusa sataker Unnayana Bhabana, Pathak Samabes, Alo and-harer Bangladesh: Manab Unnayaner Sambhabana O Cyalenja, Mawla Bradarsa, Apaunnayan: Samakalin Bangladesher Arthaniti, Samajniti, Pyapirasa, Janaganer Bajet: Amsagrahanamulaka Pariprekshita, Pathaka Samabesa.

Lok Sabha passes bill on coal block allocations

NEW DELHI: LokSabha today passed a bill which provides for fresh auction of 204 coal blocks de-allocated by the Supreme Court in September with the government allaying apprehensions of some parties that the legislation would lead to privatization of the sector, reports the times of India.

The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill, which replaces and Ordinance promulgated in October, was passed by voice vote overcoming demands by some opposition parties it be sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for closer scrutiny.

The Bill provides for "allocation of coal mines and vesting of the right, title and interest in and over the land and mine infrastructure, together with mining leases, to successful bidders and allottees through a transparent bidding process.

"This will ensure continuity in coal mining operations and production of coal. The bill prescribes the conditions to rationalise the coal sector for mining operations, consumption and sale."

Australia PM Abbott wants indigenous referendum in 2017

Australia: Australian PM Tony Abbott has vowed to "sweat blood" to secure constitutional recognition for indigenous people, saying he wants a referendum in 2017.

But Mr Abbott said he would not rush with the date until he was confident the referendum would succeed, reports BBC.

To be passed, the change must be backed by a majority of people in a majority of Australia's six states.

The constitution currently does not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the nation's first people.

Unlike in other nations settled by Europeans, such as Canada and New Zealand, Australia's constitution does not mention indigenous people.

In the past few years, there have been discussions about recognising them in a preamble to the constitution, and about changing the main part of the constitution to include a section that outlaws racial discrimination.

Aboriginal Australians represent about 2.5% of Australia's 24 million people. Gener-

ations of discrimination and disadvantage have left them with poor health and low levels of education and employment. "That would be a richly symbolic time to complete our constitution," he said.

"But I do not want it to fail because every Australian would be the loser. It is more important to get this right than to try to rush it through." And Mr Abbott stressed: "I am prepared to sweat blood on this."

"The country we created has an Aboriginal heritage, a British foundation and a multicultural character and it's high time that this reality was reflected in our constitution."

Meanwhile, opposition leader Bill Shorten urged the referendum question to be formalised before the next general elections for the campaign to move forward.

Mr Shorten said that otherwise "it is just not possible to raise awareness (about the issue) beyond the abstract".

In 2010, the government formed an expert panel to examine constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Tony Abbott is a long-term supporter of constitutional recognition of indigenous Australians. BBC

India MP Sakshi Maharaj sorry for praising Gandhi killer

India: An MP from India's governing party has apologised in parliament a day after he praised the killer of independence leader Mahatma Gandhi as a "patriot", reports the Reuters.

But Sakshi Maharaj of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) used his apology to attack the opposition Congress Party, fuelling further outrage.

Earlier this month another BJP MP sparked outrage by using offensive language to describe non-Hindus.

Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 by Nathuram Godse, a hard-line Hindu.

Godse, who was executed for the murder, resented Gandhi's calls for Hindus and Muslims to unite.

On Thursday, Sakshi Maharaj had said: "Godse was an aggrieved person. He may have done something by mistake but was not an anti-national. He was a patriot."

The comments led to outrage in parliament, with opposition MPs condemning attempts to "glorify" Godse.

"I respect Gandhi, I respect the House. I withdraw my remarks," the MP said in the lower house of parliament on Friday.

But he went on to say that the opposition Congress "killed the Mahatma's ideology in 1984 during anti-Sikh



Sakshi Maharaj is an MP from Unnao constituency in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. AP

riots", in which Congress leaders were accused of leading mob attacks.

This drew loud protests from opposition MPs, who refused to accept the apology.

The government distanced itself from his remarks.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister M Venkaiah Naidu

said nobody could accept eulogising the assassin of Gandhi.

Many Indians have taken to Twitter to express their outrage.

Journalist Abhijit Majumder tweeted that Godse stood for "everything Hinduism is not".

Spot Light News

Chinese lawyer detained for invoking constitution

Beijing: At least 260 Chinese lawyers have protested after a fellow attorney was detained by police for invoking the constitutional rights of free speech and religion in court, reports AP.

The lawyers signed an open letter condemning the police action in the northeastern province of Jilin. Zhang Lei, who drafted the letter, said Friday that lawyer Zhang Keke was detained for six hours over his speech in court defending a member of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong.

Thai flight returns after passenger scalds crew

Bangkok: A Thai airline says a flight to China returned to Bangkok after a passenger assaulted a flight attendant by tossing hot water at her, reports AP.

A statement from Thai AirAsia says the Chinese passenger on a Thursday evening flight to Nanjing berated the crew member before scalding her with the water. It says colleagues gave her first aid while the pilot returned to Bangkok and removed the passenger and her entourage of three other from the plane.

China bans national anthem at weddings

BEIJING: The national anthem should not be performed or chanted at weddings and funerals or in commercial arenas, Chinese authorities said Friday.

Also banned is performing or chanting the anthem during entertainment activities such as balls or non-political celebrations, according to a statement issued by the Communist Party of China central committee's general office and the general office of the State Council.

Sri Lanka air force plane crashes killing 4

Colombo: A Sri Lankan air force plane crashed Friday outside the island's capital, killing four and injuring one, reports AP. Air force spokesman Gihan Seneviratne said the plane crashed in foggy weather early Friday in Authrugiriya just outside the capital Colombo. Seneviratne said the plane was flying between two airports near Colombo and the pilot had reported difficulty in locating his landing strip. The police spokesman's office said four bodies were recovered from the crash site and that one injured survivor has been admitted to a hospital.

Indonesian editor-in-chief suspected of blasphemy

Jakarta: Indonesian police have named editor in chief of a leading English-language newspaper a suspect in a blasphemy case after the paper published a cartoon that allegedly insults Islam, reports AP.

The cartoon published July 3 showed a flag of the militant Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq replaced with a skull and crossbones, but it left Islamic sacred phrases in Arabic inside the skull.

China dismisses Vietnam's sovereignty claim for South China

BEIJING - China has dismissed Vietnam's sovereignty claim for the Nansha and Xisha islands in the South China Sea, saying it is "illegal and invalid" and "China will never accept such claim." Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei made the comment on late Thursday after Vietnam's foreign ministry said Vietnam held sovereignty over the Nansha and Xisha islands and objected to China's nine-dash line stance. Vietnam also said its position has been made clear to the Arbitral Tribunal on the South China Sea Arbitration initiated by the Philippines.



The U.S. Capitol dome and U.S. Senate (R) in Washington.

Reuters

US Senators back use of force against IS

WASHINGTON: Democrats on a Senate panel on Thursday unanimously supported a new authorisation for military force against Islamic State jihadists without US ground troops, signalling their willingness to tie President Barack Obama's hands on war policy.

In a party-line vote, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a three-year authorisation for use of military force that would supercede the open-ended AUMF's passed in 2001 and 2002 in the aftermath of Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on the United States.

The US-led coalition has already carried out some 1,100 airstrikes in Syria and Iraq since September targeting IS extremists in a bid to defeat the group, which has seized large swathes of territory, executed opponents and

imposed harsh Islamic law.

Under the US Constitution, Congress has ultimate power whether to declare war.

There is broad consensus that lawmakers should fully debate the use of military force in Iraq and Syria, but that will occur in 2015 under a Republican-controlled Congress.

Democrats went on record however stressing the need to retain the power on declaring war, and underscoring their opposition to the White House's open-ended use of 12-year-old authorisations to conduct military action today.

The new AUMF would "envision boots on the ground, they're just not American boots," argued Democratic committee chairman Senator Robert Menendez.

He also warned that Congress taking

no action would allow the White House to keep acting under earlier war-on-terror authorisation.

"If we wait for an administration - this or any other one - to send us their language for an AUMF and they never do it... they have a veto over the constitutional imperatives and prerogatives to declare war," he said.

Obama has sent 3,100 US military advisers into the field to help coordinate the battle against IS, and said he was relying on the previous authorisation against the Taliban and other "terrorists" of 2001, and the Iraq invasion authorisation of 2002, to do so. Many US lawmakers contest the legality of such actions.

"This is really in many ways a stand-off between the parties but also with the administration," Senate Democrat Barbara Boxer acknowledged.

26 missing after Nicaragua lobster boat sinks

MANAGUA: Nicaraguan air and sea rescue teams were searching for 26 people after a lobster boat carrying 50 people sank Thursday in the Caribbean, a military source said.

At least 24 crew members survived after the boat sank in the early morning hours, some 40 miles (64 kilometers) off the coast of Puerto Cabezas, a small town in northeast Nicaragua, reports UNB.

The head of the Nicaraguan navy told state media that a number of the survivors were rescued at sea by a passing sailboat. Fifteen crew members were picked up by small boats or swam to shore.

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or swam to shore.

The military mobilized helicopters and boats to try and find the people who were still missing late Thursday. It is believed the boat sank due to rough seas.

Fishing boats typically employ swimmers of indigenous origin or of African descent who live in this remote and impoverished coastal region of Nicaragua.



The head of the Nicaraguan navy told state media that a number of the survivors were rescued at sea by a passing sailboat. Reuters

Historical Day

President Wilson makes first U.S. presidential trip to Europe

After nine days at sea aboard the SS George Washington, Woodrow Wilson arrives at Brest, France, on December 13, 1918, and travels by land to Versailles. There, he headed the American delegation to the peace conference seeking a definitive end to World War I. The visit marked the first official visit by a U.S. president to Europe.

Although the president's political opponents criticized his European visit as a sign of egotism, Wilson worked tirelessly during the proceedings to orchestrate an agreement that would encourage a lasting peace in Europe. During the stay, Wilson also led the effort for the establishment of the League of Nations, an international organization designed to seek diplomatic solutions to future conflicts.

At Versailles, Wilson's hopes for a "just and stable peace" were opposed by the other victorious Allies, and the final treaty, which called for stiff war reparations from the former Central Powers, would be regarded with increasing bitterness in Germany in the years to come. President Woodrow Wilson was awarded the 1920 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring peace to Europe.

US sends mixed message to Myanmar military

Washington: Human rights advocates and some lawmakers say the United States is sending the wrong signal by opening the door for broader engagement with Myanmar's widely criticized military just weeks after President Barack Obama assured opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi that closer ties weren't going to happen soon, reports AP.

Congress, acting at the administration's request, is expected to allow U.S. training in some noncombat activities for the military in Myanmar, also known as Burma. This would be part of a sweeping defense policy bill slated to pass Friday.

The administration says this does not mean closer ties are imminent with a military known for rights abuses. Patrick Ventrell, a National Security Council spokesman, said the provision would "give us the flexibility to pursue slightly broader engagement if the military takes steps to implement reforms and support Burma's democratic transition."

But lawmakers who oversee U.S. foreign policy say it's ill-timed. Political reforms have stalled, tens of thousands of minority Muslims are still living under apartheid-like conditions in displacement camps after attacks by Buddhist extremists, and fighting is heating up between the government and ethnic rebels.

Ukraine's Chocolate King president finds promise tough to keep

KIEV: The Chocolate King is finding it difficult to relinquish his throne, reports Reuters. Petro Poroshenko, one of Ukraine's richest men and owner of a sweets empire, made an unusual promise last spring while campaigning to be president - if elected, he would sell most of his business assets.

"As president of Ukraine, I only want to concern myself with the good of the country and that is what I will do," he told an interviewer.

Poroshenko won the election, but he hasn't succeeded yet at keeping his campaign promise.

With his country at war with Russian-backed separatists in the east, the economy faltering and its currency weakening,

Ukraine's 49-year-old president hasn't sold any of his assets, including his most valuable one: a majority stake in Roshen Confectionery Corp, Ukraine's biggest sweets maker. His promise appears to be a victim of the very problems that face him as president. Executives at the two financial firms that Poroshenko has hired to help sell his assets caution that deals, particularly in former Soviet republics and eastern Europe, can often take a year or more. But they also concede that their client's timing is terrible. "It's clearly not a good time to sell," said Giovanni Salvetti, managing director of Rothschild CIS, which is trying to sell Roshen. "I hope the situation will improve in the first or second quarter" of 2015.



Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko looks on as he speaks at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)-Asia Fullerton Lecture at a hotel in Singapore recently. AP

Clean air and recycling laws at risk in EU

EU : The EU may scrap plans for legislation on air pollution and waste in a drive to boost the economy, according to a leaked document seen by BBC News.

In its draft workplan, the European Commission says the priorities are creating jobs, reducing public debt and increasing industrial competitiveness. It says citizens do not want Europe interfering in issues that can be solved nationally. Environmentalists are appalled, saying green issues require EU-level action.

Dirty air is the prime cause of premature death in Europe and the current air quality legislation seeks to establish a national emissions ceiling directive for six toxic pollutants.

Eleven governments have written to the Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, urging him to keep the directive on track. And the Commission's plans for a substantial revision of the legislation will be opposed next week by some MEPs. But the fate of the legislative plan to recycle 70% of municipal waste and 80% of packaging by 2030 is more uncertain.

The UK waste industry says the nation would still be sending all its waste to landfill if the EU had not stepped into a "policy vacuum". The previous Commission aspired to create a "circular

economy" - a modern society in which people live in harmony with the Earth, creating jobs through clean technology and recycling materials.

But Mr Juncker has already signalled that he will not waste time on proposals that won't fly - and the Commission's workplan says member states cannot agree on the recycling ambitions.

Environmentalists are in a rearguard battle. They think Europe's relatively tight environmental standards have given manufacturers a global lead in efficient products. But the lobby group Business Europe has argued that overzealous rules are making firms uncompetitive on the global stage.

Already the EU is treading more gingerly in its climate change leadership, and the helm of the European Council has been taken by Donald Tusk, who championed coal while prime minister of Poland (and also won admiration for keeping Poland's economy afloat in the recession).

Industrialists have also been pushing for a relaxation of rules protecting wildlife areas from new development, and they have secured a review of the Birds and Habitats directives, to see if they are fit for purpose. That review will report its findings in 2016.



EU vice-president Frans Timmermans gave paper copies of the proposal to ditch clean air and recycling laws to commissioners.

Spot Light News

South Africans mourn slain compatriots

Johannesburg: Mourners in South Africa have held separate services for two South African civilians who were killed in conflicts in Yemen and Afghanistan, reports UNB. A memorial ceremony was held Friday for Pierre Korkie, a teacher who was killed in Yemen on Dec. 6 during a U.S. raid on al-Qaida militants who were holding Korkie and American hostage Luke Somers. American officials say militants killed both men.

Shots fired at Israeli embassy in Athens

Athens: Greek authorities are investigating a pre-dawn, drive-by gunfire attack on the Israeli embassy in Athens, which caused no injuries or damage, reports AP. Police closed off a major road outside the embassy early Friday and forensics experts in white protective clothing were searching the area. Officials said at least 20 bullet casings were found near the scene of the attack, which occurred long before the building opened for business.

Fires at planned refugee housing in Germany

Berlin: Police say arsonists are suspected of setting fires at three empty buildings in Bavaria that had been earmarked to serve as accommodation for asylum seekers, reports AP. The fires broke out late Thursday evening in Vorrä, near Nuremberg. Police said Friday that anti-foreigner slogans and swastikas were found daubed at one site.

Thousands of Italian workers march against reforms

Milan: Thousands of union workers staging a general strike are marching through more than 50 Italian cities to protest government reforms that they say erode workers' rights, reports AP. The general strike, shutting down basic services across Italy, is the first ever by two of Italy's largest union confederations against a center-left government, which have traditionally cozied up to unions. Premier Matteo Renzi insists his tougher line is necessary to return the economy to growth and create jobs.

Mali govt. says last known Ebola case cured, released

Bamako: The Malian Health Ministry says the last Ebola patient being treated in the country has survived the disease and been released, reports AP. The ministry said in a statement posted on its website Friday that the patient was discharged a day earlier after several Ebola tests came back negative. Mali has recorded eight cases of Ebola, all of them linked to people who crossed from neighboring Guinea. The ministry said that the country now has no confirmed or suspected cases.

Lima climate talks: Old divisions surface between rich and poor

Climate talks in Lima have entered their final day with long-running issues still dividing the parties, despite an impassioned appeal from US Secretary of State John Kerry. Mr Kerry told the negotiators that the world was "still on a course leading to tragedy". An ambitious deal he said was "not an option, it is an urgent necessity". But ongoing battles are threatening to limit any progress in the Peruvian capital. Many developed countries want to see a change in the way the nations are classified in the UN process.

Concert for Kombol on December 19



Entertainment Desk

"Concert for Kombol", meaning concert for blanket, will be held

at the Kalabagan field from 2pm till 11pm on December 19. The concert will include participation of renowned bands

such as e Aurthohin, Maqsood O Dhaka, Bappa and Friends, Chirkutt, Obscure, Different Touch, Shunno, Yaatri, Tahsan

and Dreek. All the band performing in the concert will not be taking any charges. The main aim for the concert is to collect money to distribute blankets in 32 districts over the country.

The entry fee to the concert is a blanket and those who fail to buy one can purchase a kombol pass on the day of the event for TK 250, which will cover the price of a good quality kombol and its distribution cost.

This initiative is taken by two civil society organizations, BANDHU Foundation and Garbo Bangladesh Foundation, to improve winter clothing distribution in Bangladesh.



Salman Khan dethrones Shah Rukh from top spot on Forbes list

Entertainment Desk

Actors Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan may be starting a new chapter of their friendship after a cold war, but the latter has dethroned the former by grabbing the top spot in Celebrity 100 list for 2014 of Forbes magazine.

Interestingly, Shah Rukh has fallen down from the number one spot to Salman's last year's number three spot. The decline is because of his disappearance from the screen for the preparation and shoot of his top grosser Happy New Year.

Shah Rukh did some cameos in movies like Youngistaan and Bhoothnath Returns in the period considered for this list. Whereas, Salman was all over the entertainment sector with his films like Kick and Jai Ho. In fact, his stint as the host of the reality TV show Bigg Boss is also credited for his upward swing.

Actress Deepika Padukone has reinforced women power in Bollywood by becoming the only woman mentioned in the top ten of the

list. After featuring in movies like Happy New Year and Finding Fanny, the actress is at the eighth spot in the list with earnings of Rs 67.20 crore, said a statement.

The list is compiled by measuring money and fame, which includes estimated entertainment related earnings from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014, and their visibility on print, television and internet.

The list not only revolves around actors, television stars but even sportspersons, authors, film directors, music directors, singers and comedians.

At the second spot is megastar Amitabh Bachchan, while cricketer MS Dhoni and actor Akshay Kumar occupy the fourth and fifth position. The top five in the list dominate the earnings sweepstakes, accounting for as much as 35 per cent of the total revenues of the top 100. Salman's estimated earnings in 2014 are Rs 244.50 crore, Amitabh amassed Rs 196.75 crore, Shah Rukh minted Rs 202.40 crore, Dhoni pulled in Rs 141.80 crore and Akshay Rs 172 crore.

Man gets jail for stealing part from car Paul Walker died in



Entertainment Desk

A man who stole part of the Porsche that Fast and the Furious actor Paul Walker died in has been sentenced to six months in jail.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office says 26-year-old Anthony Janow was sentenced Tuesday in Southern California.

Paul Walker and driver Roger Rodas died in November 2013 when their speeding Porsche Carrera GT hit a tree and a light pole in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita.

Prosecutors say Janow and a friend stole a roof panel when a tow truck carrying the wreckage stopped at a red light.

Janow and 19-year-old Jameson Witty each pleaded no contest to grand theft, destroying evidence and obstructing a peace officer.

Witty was sentenced earlier this year to six months in jail.



Shraddha Kapoor hopes successful run continues in 2015

Entertainment Desk

Actress Shraddha Kapoor, who tasted success with two back-to-back hit films Ek Villain and Haider this year, hopes that coming year 2015 will be as fruitful too.

Shraddha Kapoor hopes that her next year also turns out to be successful

"I've been taking it (life) as it comes...going with a flow. Year 2014 has been a very special year, so I can only hope that this success run continues," Shraddha said at the launch of

Lakme's product here Thursday.

On the work front, Shraddha Kapoor will next be seen sharing screen space with Varun Dhawan for the first time in Remo D'Souza's dance sequel ABCD 2. The film is slated to release in mid 2015.

Horoscope

Aries (March 21 - April 19)



Someone you care about but haven't seen for a long time could suddenly contact you. You'd usually love this, Aries, but today you could be too caught up in projects of your own to want to put them aside. But you will have a lot of fun with this person, and you might even interest him or her in your project. After finishing your work, go out to dinner.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)



Today you could meet some interesting new people, Gemini. Among them is at least one person who shares a lot of your interests and could become a close friend. The joy you receive from meeting these people is likely to spill over into the rest of your day. You could be warmer and more congenial with everyone else in your life, too. In the evening, go out and have some fun.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)



Someone close who owes you money might suddenly turn up and repay you, Leo. This might be a surprise, but you will be glad to get it. You may want to blow some of it by taking a friend out to lunch or buying someone a gift. Some beautiful dreams could haunt your sleep tonight, perhaps to the point where you feel frustrated when you wake up. Write them down. They're saying something about you.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)



You should be looking especially attractive today and glowing with robust health, Libra. You're apt to feel warm and loving, particularly toward small animals. If you've considered adopting a pet, this is a good day to do it. Business, work, and money matters continue to go well. You should be in a pretty good space. This frame of mind should last you a long time.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)



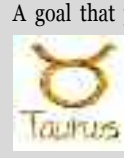
Today you might decide to buy a plant for every room in your house or plant a garden, Sagittarius. If the weather is good, you might visit a nursery or botanical garden. You may not normally be attracted to plants and gardens, but today both beauty and nature seem especially appealing. Make the most of this, however temporary. Your house will look that much more beautiful because of it!

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)



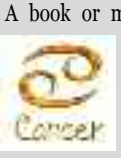
A very welcome sum of extra money could come your way today, Aquarius, possibly out of the blue. You might want to put this money to work for you in some way, perhaps investing it or purchasing supplies or materials for personal projects. You should feel especially positive where your resources are concerned, and confident in your ability to earn.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)



A goal that you've been working on could finally be reached, Taurus. A group of friends you might not have seen for a long time could schedule a get-together that you will be all too glad to attend. Expect to have a lot of fun exchanging news and ideas with these people. You will probably feel particularly happy to see them. You won't want to let so much time go by before you reconnect again.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)



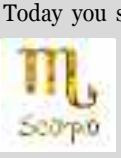
A book or movie about a foreign country could capture your imagination and make that country seem especially appealing, Cancer. You might toy with the idea of taking a trip there soon. If you're serious, it might be a good idea to start making your plans. You're in a particularly practical frame of mind and have the enthusiasm to do it. Have fun browsing through travel brochures and maps.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)



Today you should feel especially warm and loving toward everyone close to you, Virgo, particularly a love partner. You may want to spend some time with friends or family or schedule a romantic evening with your significant other - or both. If you have paperwork to take care of, this is the day to do it. You're particularly practical and feeling good, so the drudgery won't get you down.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)



Today you should be feeling especially warm and loving toward close friends and children, Scorpio. You could also especially appreciate the arts. You might attend a play or concert or decide to try your hand at one of the fine arts yourself. In the evening, go out and enjoy your friends' company. Celebrate just being together!

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)



A warm and loving communication could come to you today from someone close. This could be an email, call, or even a gift of some kind. This could make your day, Capricorn, and you will probably pass whatever good feelings you draw from it to other friends and family members. Take a walk around your neighborhood and say hello to whomever you meet. It will make you feel even better!

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)



Today you may feel especially warm and loving toward just about everybody in your circle, Pisces, even those you usually find irritating. You could also be looking especially attractive and feeling more confident than usual. You might even feel like shopping for new clothes. Artistic ideas could flow freely, and you might think of different ways to put them to work for you.



Words were exchanged between a number of players from both sides on the fourth day in Adelaide. Cricinfo

Tensions rise as players lose cool

Sports Desk

The unnatural calm that existed between these two teams evaporated in the Adelaide heat when the umpires had to intervene on at least two occasions to separate the squabbling players. David Warner and Virat Kohli were involved in both instances, but as pacifiers in one each. On day three, when Kohli was hit on the helmet, Warner was the first one to walk up to him and check on him, reports Cricinfo.

The players lost their cool when Varun Aaron bowled Warner in the middle session on day four. Kohli had already been in the face of Chris Rogers when the opener had been dismissed. Now when Warner got out, both Kohli and Aaron gave him a bit of a send-off. It was the 34th over, Warner had already raced away to 66, and Australia were effectively 1 for 193. The send-off and the celebration didn't quite look on for the state India were in.

However, the umpires checked the replays and found out that Aaron had overstepped. Warner came back all happy and mocking the send-off, shouting "come on, come on". All hell broke loose. The not-out batsman, Shane Watson, and Shikhar Dhawan got into an altercation even as Kohli was trying to pacify Aaron and Warner. Warner shouted "come on" again as he left alone a delivery. That incensed the Indians some more. And when Warner crossed Aaron while taking a single, more pleasantries were exchanged, including a kiss blown by Warner to Aaron, who just didn't know how to react at being sledged by a batsman, a reversal of roles to which he didn't seem accustomed.

Later during the day, when Steven Smith had joined Warner, Rohit Sharma appealed for a leg-before when Smith had been miles down the wicket. It was by all accounts just a polite - albeit

far-fetched - enquiry to the umpire, Marais Erasmus. Smith gave the Indians an incredulous look and shrugged, which for some reason made Rohit lose his cool. "What? What?" Rohit was heard asking Smith, who just kept smiling until he saw Kohli had left his station at first slip and planted himself mere inches from Smith. Angry words seem to fly until Warner walked all the way up to separate the two.

The umpires had to get involved again, and could be seen having a long chat with Kohli, followed by smaller ones during the next few over breaks. The rest of the day went largely incident-free, but it has the potential to sour the spirit in which the first three days were played. Both sides, though, sought to underplay what happened.

"I don't know if the temperature got to 40 degrees-plus, but it was getting to a few people out there," Warner said of the incidents.

'Big 4' will be hard to topple in Champions League

Sports Desk

With nine different winners in the last 11 years, no one could ever accuse the Champions League of being predictable, reports Yahoo.

It does appear, however, that an established "Big 4" has been created in Europe's premier club competition - and this year's group stage backs up the theory.

Barcelona, Chelsea, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid, the last four winners of European soccer's top prize, were the top teams in group play, which finished Wednesday. In each of the last three seasons, at least three of that quartet has reached the semifinals of the Champions League. Madrid and Barcelona did so in 2011, too.

So, heading into the knockout stage that kicks off in February, it would be a big surprise if this season's champion didn't come from this small pool of juggernauts - teams who currently are playing football at another level to the rest.

"Everybody's there, so the Champions League starts now," Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho said of a last-16 lineup that contains 11 of the teams who advanced in the 2013-14 season.

No club has ever successfully defended the Champions League title since the competition's inception in 1992. Could Madrid be about to end that jinx?

At top of the Spanish league, a team boasting the attacking talents of Cristiano Ronaldo,

Gareth Bale, James Rodriguez and Karim Benzema was the only one to pick up a maximum 18 points in the group stage. Madrid has won its last 19 games in all competitions and Ronaldo, the reigning world player of the year, has already reached 30 goals for the season.

"I know I've got an extraordinary team," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said after Tuesday's 4-0 win over Ludogorets Razgrad. "I don't tire from saying this."

Any side that contains Lionel Messi will always have a great chance, and Barcelona will be expected to reach the semifinals after missing out last season. Barcelona's defense remains a concern - although it has only conceded seven goals in 14 games in the Spanish league - but Wednesday's 3-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain at Camp Nou gave a taste of what to expect from its expensively assembled, all-star attack.

Messi - with his record-extending 75th Champions League goal - was on the score sheet along with Neymar and Luis Suarez. The trio is six weeks into its new partnership and when the last 16 comes around it could be unstoppable.

"We know that together we can go places," Suarez said Wednesday after Barcelona sealed first place in its group for the eighth straight season.

Bayern's only defeat in a tough-looking Group E came at Manchester City after playing more than 70 minutes with 10 men and conceding twice in the last five minutes to lose 3-2. The German champions have few weaknesses in their team, with their attack looking even stronger with the addition of Robert Lewandowski, and have a coach in Pep Guardiola who has gone all the way before in the Champions League, with Barcelona in 2009 and '11.

Chelsea, meanwhile, has found a cure to its attacking frailties of last season with the signing of Spain striker Diego Costa and was the top-scoring team in the group stage, with 17 goals in six games. Traditionally strong in defense, Eden Hazard is developing into one of the world's best wingers and Cesc Fabregas has brought more creativity into the team's midfield.



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo scores the team's first goal from a penalty during a Group B Champions League soccer match between Real Madrid and Ludogorets at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014. AP



Pakistan's Umar Bhutta Muhammad (C) celebrates a goal against the Netherlands with teammates during their Hero Hockey Champions Trophy 2014 quater final match at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on December 11, 2014. AP

India, Pakistan set for intriguing semi

Sports Desk

Arch-rivals India and Pakistan return to centre stage in field hockey on Saturday after a controversial format helped them reach the Champions Trophy semi-finals in Bhubaneswar, reports Yahoo.

Instead of rewarding performances in the preliminary league, all eight teams were assured of reaching the quarter-finals-a round which turned the tournament on its head, and left some teams quietly fuming.

The top four teams in the league-England, the Netherlands, Argentina and Belgium-were all knocked out in Thursday's round of eight, while the bottom four sailed through to the semi-finals.

The format also helped new-look world champions Australia, seeking a sixth successive title, and Olympic gold-medallists Germany recover from shaky starts to line up for Saturday's other semi-final.

Hosts India, ranked ninth in the world, fought back from a 0-2 deficit to beat number four Belgium 4-2. Eleventh-ranked Pakistan stunned the Dutch by a similar margin after losing all their three league matches.

The Germans knocked out England 2-0

and Australia ousted Argentina 4-2.

Dutch coach Max Caldas had been wary of the format from the start. "If you lose all three league games, you could still win the tournament and I think that's bad," he had said earlier in the week.

In contrast, the surviving teams could not hide their glee.

"Although I am not in favour of this (format), today I don't mind it," Australian coach Graham Reid said on Thursday.

German captain Moritz Furst added: "In this situation it is good for us. It has given us a lease of life. We can go on to win the tournament from here."

Pakistan coach Shahnaz Shaikh tempered his joy with a suggestion. "To make this format fair to everyone, a handicap of one goal should be given to the table-toppers," he said.

Millions of fans across India and Pakistan will tune in to what should be a rousing semi-final, a repeat of the Asian Games gold medal clash in South Korea in October which India won in a penalty shoot-out.

Once the masters of the sport, neither team has advanced to the final of a major world competition since 1998, when Pakistan lost the Champions Trophy final to the Dutch in Lahore.

"I am so happy that both teams are in the semi-final," Shaikh said. "For fans it is a dream. For me, it is a good sign that Asian teams have started to do well again."

India have not won a major title since bagging the last of their eight Olympic gold medals at the Western-boycotted Moscow Games in 1980.

Dutchman Roelant Oltmans, India's high performance director who is acting as coach after Australian Terry Walsh was controversially axed last month, preferred to look ahead to the 2016 Olympics.

"We need to play tough matches to prepare for the Olympics," said Oltmans, who had earlier coached Pakistan. "And this tournament is as tough as it gets."

The other semi-final promises to be a classic between two young sides.

Australia wear a new look in the absence of veterans Liam de Young and Rob Hammond, who retired after the World Cup in June, and five-time world player of the year Jamie Dwyer and Mark Knowles, who are both injured.

Germany, with seven junior World Cup winners from 2013 in their squad, are banking on Furst, the world player of the year in 2012, to deliver.

News in Brief



Kvitova eyes world number one spot

Sports Desk

Reigning Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic says she is aiming to improve her Grand Slam performances while keeping an eye on the world number one spot for 2015. Kvitova won her second Wimbledon title this year, but she only made it to the third round at the French and US Opens and lost in the first round of the Australian Open. In November, Kvitova led the Czech Republic to a third Fed Cup trophy in four years after beating Germany's Angelique Kerber in the finals in Prague in "a great battle and the perfect match to end the season on a high". Kvitova has started training for next season with a new fitness coach, Alex Stober, whom she inherited from Li Na after the Chinese star retired. "He has a lot of experience and he knows what to do.



Alonso says 2007 his only F1 regret

Sports Desk

The two-time world champion has rejoined the team he left in acrimonious circumstances seven years ago, and he says that the disappointment of that campaign is part of the reason behind him wanting to return for 2015. "It was not the best feeling in 2007," Alonso said at the McLaren Technology Centre on Thursday. But in all the years since, inside I only had one thing remaining in Formula 1 to do. I was happy with everything I have done apart from 2007. I didn't achieve or deliver the best of myself. So now, some years later, you are more mature, you learn things, you understand things you didn't know at 25 years old. Now I arrive to finish the job that I started in 2007.



Radford skating with new freedom at GP final

Sports Desk

Canada's Eric Radford admitted that he was skating with a new-found freedom as he and pairs partner Meagan Duhamel surged to the lead after the short programme at the ISU Grand Prix final on Thursday. Radford, 29, was performing in Barcelona just days after coming out as gay. And the pair drew gasps from the audience for their fluid and acrobatic display as they led Olympic silver medallists Ksenia Stolbova and Fedor Klimov by 2.17 points going into Saturday's free skating final. The Canadians spoil what would have been a dream opening day for Russia who dominated the women's event on the first day of competition with Elizaveta Tuktamysheva leading the way ahead of three countrywomen -- Julia Lipnitskaya, Elena Radionova and Anna Pogorilaya -- in the six-woman field.

Crosswords

Quiz No-582



Answers of the Quiz No-583



DOWN

- 1. Early 20th-century art movement 2. Pitcher 3. Head 4. Chocolate cookie 5. Electrical pioneer 6. Estimated time of arrival 7. Hydrophobia 8. Sickness 9. Search 10. Enticements 11. Soup server 12. Discrimination against the elderly 13. Dishes out 18. Children's game 24. Scarlet 25. An independent film company 26. Barely 27. Against 28. Shopping place 29. Gasping 31. Where the sun rises 33. Flowing tresses 34. Send forth 36. Feudal worker 37. Sun 38. An exchange involving money 42. A song 43. Historic period 45. Jubilant 47. Extent 48. European blackbird 49. Conscious 51. Buff 52. S S S S 54. Learning method 56. Audible exhale 57. River of Spain 58. Killed 59. Collections 62. S

ACROSS

- 1. Storehouse 6. Goddess of discord 10. Close violently 14. Cognizant 15. Story 16. Hourly pay 17. Abhorrent 19. Modify 20. Ring around the nipple 21. Writing liquid 22. If not 23. Concur 25. List components 26. Doorpost 30. Ancient ascetic 32. Without a weapon 35. Unhappiness 39. Brook 40. Afternoon nap 41. Historic ship 43. Continuing forever 44. Leash 46. Arid 47. Housemaids 50. Winged 53. Whimper 54. Ribonucleic acid 55. Judge 60. Scottish hillside 61. Apparent 63. Varieties 64. Foot digits 65. Everglades bird 66. T T T T 67. Terminates 68. Displays

Walto’s mammoth preparation in TV production for World Cup at DI Trade Fair

Business Desk

The ICC Cricket World Cup-2015 is scheduled to be held in February-March next. Only a month is left to start the mega sports event. However, Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2015, the biggest and most vibrant showcasing event in the country, will also take place in the time. Price cuts for LED, other TV sets, reports in press release.

Walton, the country's leading television sets manufacturing and marketing company, has taken mammoth preparation ahead of the world cup and Trade Fair. The company increased its production maintaining the standard and quality of the products to meet the huge demand of television sets during DITF-2015 and ICC Cricket World Cup.

However, the overhead production cost has decreased due to the increase of the amount of production. For which prices of all kinds of Walton brand television sets including LED TV have been reduced. Besides, several new models are ready to be released for ICC World Cup and Dhaka International Trade Fair. Currently Walton has a total of 64 different models of LED and CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) television sets. Market analysis says the demand of CRT, LCD and LED television sets rises during the World Cup. The demand of Smart LED television has rose high in recent times with the achievements of technological perfection. Considering the facts, the production of Walton television sets has been increased a several times. Authorities concerned said Walton has 32 different model LED television sets starting from 14-inch to 55-inch. Prices of different models have been reduced

from Tk. 300 up to Tk. 10,000. 14-inch LED television is now available at Tk. 9,500. Tk. 1,000 has been cut from the price of 16-inch LED television. The 16-inch LED television now costs only Tk. 10,900. 55-inch LED television can now be purchased at Tk. 90,900. The price cut not only applicable for LED

the amount of production. For which Walton has cut its prices for the television sets. However, the quality and standard of the products increased. Walton is manufacturing various model television sets complying with the taste and demands of the customers."

He said Walton is manufacturing LED and CRT television sets considering the purchasing ability of the low income people. So, the prices of these TV sets will be reduced more in future.

The most popular local brand has already started manufacturing televisions sets in ultra-modern automatic machine at its own factory. A vast Warehouse has been set up where 1.70 lakh to 2.00 lakh TV sets can

be stored. Earlier, only 30 to 50 thousand TV sets can be stored. The production has also been increased several times. Moudud Pervez Mamun, In-Charge of Walton Television Marketing Department, said Walton manufactures products at competitive prices maintaining the quality and standard. The company has created a revolution in manufacturing LED television sets. Modern technology is used in production and quality controlling. He further informed that Walton itself produces the raw materials for television production. It should be mentioned here that Walton has released 4K UHD LED television sets in the market. The popular brand also started producing TV remote of its own unique design. The related authorities are very hopeful with the fast growing television manufacturing sector. After meeting the local demand, Walton television sets are being exported to different countries in the world.



televisions but also for CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) televisions. Consumers can buy the CRT TV of Tk. 9,500 now for Tk. 7,600 while 21-inch CRT TV can be purchased at Tk. 10,950.

Mustafa Nahid Hossain, an Engineer of Walton, said the company is releasing several new model television sets at the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF). Among them, 32-inch Internet Surfing Television, 19 and 24-inch Color Line LED Television, 55 and 65-inch curved OLED (Organic Light-Emitting Diode) Television and 65-inch AEHD (Ultra High Definition) 3D Smart Television will be consumers' prime attractions. Emdadul Haque Sarker, Executive Director of Walton's Marketing Department, said, "The demand of television sets is almost same throughout the year. Yet all necessary preparation has been taken considering the two biggest upcoming events - Cricket World Cup and Trade Fair. As a result, the overhead production cost lessens for increasing

US House passes \$1.1tn budget bill to avert shutdown

US : The US House of Representatives has passed a \$1.1tn budget, hours before government was due to shut down at midnight on Thursday, reports AP.

The Republican measure was passed by 219 votes to 206 after President Barack Obama had urged Democrats to support the budget..

It will fund most of the government until September 2015, but some areas will only receive short-term funding.

Republicans won control of both House and Senate in elections last month.

A relieved John Boehner, the Republicans' House leader, said: "Thank you and Merry Christmas."

Asian shares mixed, upbeat US data offset by China woes

HONG KONG: Asian markets were mixed Today at the end of a painful week for global shares, as strong US retail sales lifted spirits and Wall Street, while China released another batch of data indicating weakness in the world's number two economy, reports AFP/BSS.

Oil prices continued to tumble after New York's main contract sank through the \$60-a-barrel mark in US trade for the first time in more than five years.

Tokyo rose 0.66 percent, or 114.18 points, to close at 17,371.58 as the yen eased after a recent pick-up, while Seoul added 0.27 percent, or 5.12 points, to 1,921.71 and Sydney slipped 0.22 percent, or 11.37 points, to 5,219.6.

Shanghai ended 0.42 percent higher, adding 12.43 points to 2,938.17 on hopes for further Beijing stimulus after a disappointing set of industrial output figures. However, Hong Kong was 0.10 percent lower in the late afternoon.

Global markets have been buffeted by profit-taking this week, while Shanghai has swung wildly after racking up more than 20 percent since the middle of November.

However, spirits were lifted by a rally on Wall Street that came in reaction to a healthy US consumer report.

The Commerce Department said retail sales in November, when the holiday shopping season starts, rose 0.7 percent month-on-month and 5.1 percent over the year. The figures are closely watched as consumer spending accounts for almost three quarters of output in the world's biggest economy.

In New York the Dow gained 0.36 percent, the S&P 500 added 0.45 percent and the Nasdaq rose 0.52 percent.

Thursday's news was the latest to indicate the United States is on a strong recovery track and will add to pressure on the Federal Reserve to hike interest rates sooner than later, buoying the dollar.



Hong Kong, Shanghai markets end mixed

HONG KONG: Hong Kong shares ended 0.27 percent lower Friday following another round of poor Chinese data, although Shanghai ended a tumultuous week on a high as investors bet on fresh stimulus measures to boost the mainland economy, reports AFP/BSS.

The Hang Seng Index shed eased 63.34 points to 23,249.20 on turnover of HK\$76.89 billion (\$99.21 billion). In mainland China the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.42 percent, or 12.43 points, to 2,938.17 on turnover of 420.4 billion yuan (\$68.7 billion). The index, which slumped more than five percent.

Ruble hits new record lows despite rate hike

MOSCOW: The ruble fell Today to record lows as oil prices also sank, despite Russia's central bank hiking its interest rate the day before in an attempt to halt the currency's plunge and the resulting price rises, reports AFP/BSS.

The ruble fell to record levels of 71 against the euro and 57 against the dollar as the Moscow stock exchange opened, before rallying slightly.

Since the beginning of the year, the ruble has lost 36 percent of its value against the

euro and 42 percent against the dollar.

The ruble fell Friday along with oil prices. Oil and gas revenues accounting for more than half of Russia's revenues.

On Thursday the Bank of Russia regulator raised the interest rate for the fifth time this year to 10.5 percent from 9.5 percent. The interest rate was 5.5 percent at the beginning of the year.

The foreign exchange market reacted with disappointment, seeing the rate raise as not enough, Alfa Bank analysts said.



The IEA, a consultancy to 29 countries.

Oil price falls further on IEA energy forecast

The price of oil has fallen further after the International Energy Agency forecast weaker demand in 2015, reports AFP.

The IEA, a consultancy to 29 countries, said supply and demand would take "some time" to respond to sharp falls in oil prices.

It said it was too early to expect low oil prices to start constricting a US supply boom. On Friday, Brent crude fell to below \$63 a barrel, its lowest price since July 2009. The price of Brent fell to \$62.50 a barrel at one point before recovering slightly to \$62.67. US crude was trading below \$59 a barrel. The IEA cut its forecast for global oil demand growth next year by 230,000 barrels per day to 900,000 barrels per day on the expectation of lower fuel consumption in Russia and other oil-exporting countries.

Oil prices have been in steep decline since June due to slow demand growth and a US shale oil boom which has increased supply.

Prices "continued to plunge in November and into early December", the IEA said, adding that, "it may well take some time for supply and demand to respond to the price rout". The root cause of the fall in prices was "a surge in non-Opec supply to its highest growth ever and contraction in demand growth to five-year lows". It predicted that non-Opec supply gains would add to a global glut of oil. The US boom should push non-Opec production to a record 1.9 million barrels per day this year, IEA said, but this figure should fall to 1.3 million barrels per day in 2015. In Russia, the IEA said lower global oil prices combined with the effect of sanctions and a "collapsing currency" were likely to have an adverse effect on production.

Sony to launch PlayStation consoles in China from January

SHANGHAI: Japanese gaming giant Sony is to offer its PlayStation consoles in China from January, the company said, following rival Microsoft into the potentially lucrative market after China ended a 14-year ban, reports AP.

The company will launch the PlayStation 4, the latest in its series, in China on January 11, priced at 2,899 yuan (\$475), Sony said in a release, adding pre-sales started Friday. Its handheld game

console PlayStation Vita will also be available, with a price tag of 1,299 yuan, it added. US technology giant Microsoft launched its Xbox One console in China in late September, initially priced at 3,699 yuan, the first foreign company to enter the market. China in January authorised the domestic sale of game consoles through its first free-trade zone (FTZ) in Shanghai, ending a ban originally instituted in 2000 due to worries

over content.

Beijing imposes strict controls on materials it deems to be obscene, violent or politically sensitive, and under the rules of the FTZ games must pass inspection by cultural authorities.

Sony said the company plans to launch games including Little Big Planet 3 and Final Fantasy, as well as a few titles from Chinese developers. Game content had been submitted to related authorities for approval, it added.



Sony Computer Entertainment's PlayStation 4 20th anniversary edition video game console is displayed at Sony's showroom in Tokyo. AFP/Dawn

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BANGLADESH OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER EM CIRCLE, KAMATOLA, DHAKA-1222				
" INTERNAL SHORT TENDER NOTICE "				
01	Agency/Department	Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh		
02	Source of funds	CAAB own funds		
03	Procurement Method	LIMITED TENDERING METHOD (LTM)		
04	Invitation for Tenders Ref. & date	No. CAAB/VA-472/EM/Cap/Exp/Part-151(kn)/2536 dated: 19.11.2014		
05	Eligibility of Tenderers	CAAB invited "B" Class & above Class EM Contractors having valid "BC" class electrical Contracting & Supervisory License		
06	Name & address of the office(s) Submitting Tender document	Tender papers will be available from the CAAB office of the Superintending Engineer (EM Circle, Director/CMSU), Executive Engineer (EM Division-II), P.A. to Member/Ops & Plans), Chief Engineer & Director, (HSIA), Kamatola Dhaka, during the office hours.		
07	Name & address of the office Receiving Tender & Opening Tender	Office of the Superintending Engineer, EM Circle, CAAB, Kamatola Dhaka		
08	Last date & time for selling tender document	Upto 1700 hours on: 30-12-2014		
09	Last date & time for submission of tender	Upto 1200 hours on: 31-12-2014		
10	Date & Time for Opening of tender	At 1230 hours on: 31-12-2014		
11	Brief description of goods & Services (Works & Services)			
Lot No.	Identification of Lot	Nature of work	Price of Tender document in Taka	Tender security amount in Taka
1	Package No. GS-321(DG) CAAB/EM-11 (OE)/2014-2015	Development of lighting system of VVIP Complex & adjacent area at HSIA (S.H.) providing & installation of illumination system, UPS, SDB board & cable connection for light fittings of VVIP Complex at HSIA	Tk. 1000/- (One Thousand Only) (Non-refundable)	Tk. 65,000/- (Sixty Five Thousand) Only. In tender security money in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of the Superintending Engineer, EM Circle CAAB Dhaka.
12	Reason for rejection of the Tender	If attested copy of the upto date payment renewal fee receipt, upto date Trade License VAT Registration, upto date Income Tax Certificate, upto date "BC" class electrical Contracting & Supervisory License, the original money receipt of purchasing tender document, requisite earnest money, Authorization of Representative & attestation of Signature by the Proprietor in absence of Proprietor & requisite tender documents are not furnished alongwith the tender.		
13	Special condition	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any tender or part thereof or reject all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.		
14	Special instruction	In case of any unavoidable circumstances if the transport & communication systems are totally disrupted on the last date of receiving & opening of the tender, the tender will be received & opened on the next office day. Other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.		

সিএএবি/পিআর-৫৮/২০১৪/৫০২
তারিখ: ১০-১২-২০১৪ খ্রি.
জিডি-১৭৭১/১৪ (৮x৩)

(MD. ABDUL MALEK)
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
EM CIRCLE, CAAB, DHAKA



4 hurt as train rams human hauler in Gazipur

GAZIPUR : Four people were injured when a train slammed into a human hauler at Mouchak level crossing in Kaliakoir upazila on Friday, reports UNB.

The identities of the victims could not be known immediately.

Dadan Mia, sub-inspector of Joydebpur Police Station, said the accident took place in the area around 10.00am when Khulna-bound 'Sundarban Express' train crashed into a Konabari-bound hauman hauler from Sakeshwar while crossing the level crossing, leaving four passengers of the human hauler injured.

Later they were rushed to local hospital and clinics with the help of local people.

Mohammad Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Mouchak Police Camp, also confirmed the incident.

7 get 5 yrs' jail in Sylhet carjacking case

SYLHET : A tribunal here on Thursday convicted seven people and sentenced them to five years' imprisonment for snatching a microbus leaving its driver unconscious in 2011, reports UNB.

The convicts were identified as Manir alias Sumon alias Swapna, 28, of sadar upazila of Patuakhali district; Mohammad Alauddin Alal, 35, of Homna upazila in Comilla district; Abul Hossain alias Ali Hossain, 26, of Biswanath upazila in Sylhet district; Parimal Chandra Hawladar alias Sagar, 29, of Taltali upazila and Mohammad Anis, 25, of Sadar upazila in Barguna district; Mohammad Islam, 26, of Arahazur upazila in Narayanganj; and Jashim Uddin, 23, of Haimchar in Chandpur district.

The court also fined them Tk10,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more of rigorous imprisonment.

According to the prosecution, the convicts hired a microbus from Dariapara microbus stand in the city for going to Jafalong on November 9, 2011.



Rob's mobile court on Friday raided the chicken food factory at Bou-Bazaar, Hazaribagh, Dhaka.

Photo : Banglar Chokh

Remarks of Kader Mollah's son tantamount to contempt of court : Suranjit

DHAKA : Awami League Advisory Council member Suranjit Sengupta, MP, yesterday said that the recent remarks of son of Kader Mollah, who was handed down with capital punishment by the war crimes tribunal for his crimes against humanity in 1971, on review of his father's verdict tantamount to contempt of court, reports UNB.

"Kader Mollah's son remarked that the Supreme Court killed his father. Such remarks of Kader Mollah's son Hasan Jamil were objectionable, similar to contempt of court and contradictory to the Constitution," he said.

Suranjit Sengupta, a senior parliamentarian of the ruling Awami League, said this while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion in the city.

Bangabandhu Academy organised the discussion on current politics at the Institution of Diploma Engineers at Kakrail in the capital with its adviser Nazimuddin in the chair.

Dhaka City Awami League vice-president Faezuddin Miah, Bangabandhu Academy leader freedom fighter Abdul Hye Kanu and assistant secretary of Awami League sub-committee Barrister Zakir Hossain were the discussants, among others.

Terming the remarks of some BNP leaders on the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) polls as unwarranted, Suranjit Sengupta said, "It's the fault of the government if it opts for polls to DCC or not. As soon as the decision for holding of the polls to

DCC has been announced, they (BNP leaders) said that the polls to DCC had been announced to foil their movement. Then which way we should choose!

BNP should clear its stand whether it wants polls to DCC or not. The city dwellers want DCC polls whether Begum Khaleda Zia wants or not. So, the polls should be held expeditiously for the sake of democracy."

The senior Awami League leader said, "Khaleda Zia's reading on polls was frosty which has become clear now. The cat came out of the sack after the statement of the European Union (EU) in this regard. In its recent statement the EU mentioned that they have no comments on the polls (in Bangladesh).

Inu refutes allegation of repression on BNP

KUSTHIA : Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday refuted BNP's allegation of repression on them (BNP men) saying that their leaders and activists are enjoying all sorts of privileges and opportunities under the purview of democracy, reports BSS.

"It's absolutely false that government machineries are resorting to repressive acts on BNP leaders and workers. On the contrary, they are enjoying all sorts of privileges in line with democracy," he said while talking to local journalists after a view-exchange-meeting with the teachers of Bheramara Degree College here. Inu, also the president of Jatiya Sanjatantrik Dal (JSD), said BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda is frequently speaking in vain that they would launch a tougher movement against the government.

"It's quite impossible to fix the timetable to unseat this government like that of the trial of war criminals which may not be scheduling any national day," he continued.

"Movement can be possible only through mass people's participation but they (BNP) have no such involvement," he said.

On maintaining strict security vigils, he said "We only ensure tight security measures when Begum Zia engages her activities to create unrest and anarchy across the country to foil the government's development activities."

Bherama Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shanti Moni Chakma, Principal of Bheramara Degree College Shamsur Rahman, among others, accompanied the minister, who also exchanged views with his party leaders and workers there.

Melee forces postpones joint workers' meeting

DINAJPUR : A triangular clash in the presence of BNP's central leaders over sitting on the podium at a joint workers' meeting of the party and its associate bodies left at least seven people injured in the district town on Friday, reports UNB.

The joint workers' meeting of the district BNP and its front organisations was arranged at Dinajpur Lokhaban in the town in the morning. BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman and joint secretary general Mizanur

Rahman Minu attended the programme as guests.

An altercation took place between the supporters of district BNP general secretary Mukur Chowdhury and Shahriar Akhter Haque Don, nephew of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, around 11:30am over sitting on the podium.

Later, the followers of Lutfar Rahman Mintu joined the feud.

At one stage, the three groups engaged in a clash in the presence of the central BNP leaders. The unruly BNP men vandalised the stage of the

rally during the melee that left seven people injured.

Later, Mahbubur Rahman and Minu stepped in to quell to feuding groups. However, their efforts went in vain as the clashing groups paid no heed to them.

Finally, the two central BNP leaders left the podium amid the triangular clash.

Meanwhile, the car of Mahbubur Rahman came under attack while he was leaving the venue.

Subsequently, the joint worker's meeting has been postponed.



A tractor driver was killed on Friday after his vehicle got hit by a truck near Bangabandhu bridge's 86 no. pillar.

Photo : Bangar Chokh

Cape Agulhas : The Place Where Two Oceans Meet

INTERESTING NEWS

When Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias rounded the rocky headland of South Africa's Cape Peninsula in 1488, he became the first European to do so, thus opening the way for a sea route from Europe to Asia. He named it the "Cape of Storms", because of the perilous sea, but it was later renamed "Cape of Good Hope", because it brought hopes of a new sea route to India. On his return journey, Dias passed another rocky headland, but he was

unaware that this unimpressive point was the southern extremity of Africa. Indeed, many people still believe that Cape of Good Hope is the southernmost tip of the African continent, but that title belongs to Cape Agulhas - the inconspicuous rocky headland about 150 km further south. Incidentally, Cape Agulhas is also the place where the official dividing line between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans passes. A stone plaque on the beach marks the place. (For more interesting news visit: The Bangladesh Today/Fun Facts)



Martyred Intellectuals Day DMP asks vehicles to use alternate routes on Sunday

DHAKA : Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) on Friday asked all types of service transports such as bus, truck, human hauler and three wheelers to ply on alternative routes instead of Mazar Road crossing to Mirpur-1 crossing from 6:00 am to 9:30 am on December 14, reports UNB.

The DMP requested the service transports to use alternative roads for smooth movement of vehicles during the period as President, Prime Minister, and leaders of various political parties and other organisations will go to the Martyred Intellectuals Monument in Mirpur to pay homage on the Martyred Intellectuals Day on Sunday (Dec 14).

The DMP advised that the vehicles which will come to Mirpur from Ashulia via Mirpur Beribadh must use Shah Ali Thana road after turning left of Nababerbagh crossing.

The transports, which will have to cross Shah Ali mazar area through Mazar Road crossing, must use Darus Salam Road through the Technical crossing.

Awami League to observe January 5 as Day of Victory for Democracy

DHAKA : The ruling Awami League will observe January 5 as the Day of Victory for Democracy, reports BSS.

The party has decided to observe the day in all the upazila and district headquarters with elaborate programmes including bringing out of colourful marches.

Awami League joint general secretary Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif, MP, disclosed this to reporters at a press conference emerging from a joint meeting at the political office of party president Sheikh Hasina at Dhanmondi in the city.

Awami League presidium member and Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif said, "There would have been a constitution-

al crisis had the January 5 national polls of 2014 not been held. Many persons remarked that there would have been a situation like civil war in the country."

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina retained the democratic process in the country overcoming many hurdles and impediments and for this reason, the Awami League has taken a decision to observe the day as the Day of Victory for Democracy in a befitting manner.

In reply to a question on BNP's counter programme on the day, the Awami League leader said, "It not a matter of consideration to our party. As a political party, Awami League will continue to observe democratic programmes."

Besides, he said, the Awami League will

observe the Martyred Intellectuals Day on December 14, the Victory Day on December 16 and the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu on January 10 in a befitting manner.

Awami League (AL) presidium member Satish Chandra Roy, joint general secretary Advocate Jahangir Kabir Nanak, central leaders Abdur Rahman, Ahmed Hossain, Dr Abdus Sobhan Golap, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya (Bir Bikram), acting president of Dhaka City AL MA Aziz, state minister for ICT affairs (Information and Communication Technology) Junaid Ahmed Palak and party parliamentarians of Dhaka City and presidents and general secretaries of AL's associate bodies attended the meeting, among others.

Cosmetics company driver crushed under bus in city

DHAKA : A driver of a cosmetics manufacturing company was killed as a bus ran over him the moment he alighted from another bus near Biman office in the city's Motijheel on Friday morning, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Akbar Ali, 35, son of Mansur Ali.

He was a driver of Mousomi Industries Ltd, manufacturer of widely popular cosmetics brand 'Cute', and also a resident of Konapara under Demra police station.

Police, quoting witnesses, said Akbar was run over by a bus just after he got down from another bus on the west side of Motijheel Biman office, popularly known as 'Bak Chatter' in the morning.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 8:00 am, said Inspector Mozammel at DMCH police camp.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy.